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The Letters of Eve

Olivia Maitland Davidson
(EVE OF THE TATLER)

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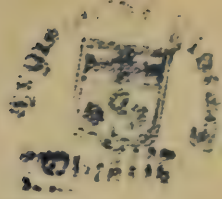
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THE LETTERS OF EVE



THE AUTHOR

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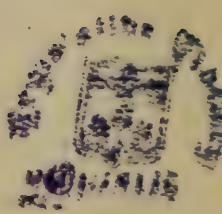
THE LETTERS OF EVE

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BY

OLIVIA MAITLAND-DAVIDSON
(ÈVE OF THE *TATLER*)

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FOREWORD

In the glass of yesterday we see to-day and to-morrow. And through the dainty gold-rimmed lorgnette of Eve, "the world's unwearied lover," one may perhaps trace more truly than in any mere history the tale of the deeds and the emotions, the happenings grave and gay, that have brought us to this fifth year of the Great War.

Beneath her light and sparkling touch and airily foamy style lies a wide comprehension of men and affairs, a close intimacy with every movement of every moment, and, beyond all, a deep sympathy with the world's joys and sorrows that has brought her something more than fame.

To men and women all over the world, and not least to the Services, Eve's letters in the *Tatler* every week have become an institution, and those now published will be welcomed, one may hope, not only as a brilliant commentary of these War years, sketched in with lightning strokes, but as a reflection, rarely sympathetic and alive, of their varying moods and passions, their hopes and despairs, their waves of righteous anger, and their rich harvests of glowing pride.

D.

THE LETTERS OF EVE

200, Curzon Street,
Mayfair.
June 14*th*, 1914.

My dear Betty,

You know, Tou-Tou and me, we're really *seriously* thinking of gettin' us to a nunnery or something (s'pose they'd admit a Peke, wouldn't they ?). Guess I could smuggle him in all right if they wouldn't—inside the ample folds of my cowl or my wimple, or whatever they call 'em. After all, he's been to the Opera with me (and *how* he hated it, poor darling !), and there isn't any superfluity of draperies there to hide his fluffsome ears and feathery tail in.

The nunnery idea 's 'cos really it's been almost *too* t'rific for even this

world's unwearied lover,

your Eve—the norful rush of this, the very bingyest season that ever was. We are now, as the papers say, vergin' on the height of it. And what the heights 'll be like if this is the mere vergin' part . . .

Such a rush as everything is, you *never* saw. Strawdin'ry the way people, soon as June is here, gather into clumps, isn't it ? Who was it said how 'tis " very fantastical and contradictory in human

nature that people are thought to love themselves better than the rest of the world, yet can never endure to be with themselves " ?

Doing the disappearin' act, they say the birth-rate is. But " society " might be rabbits. Waxeth and multiplieth daily, dothn't it, like the ungodly and the green bay-tree that they put bits of into the blancmange ? Talk of the Upper Ten . . . Upper Million's more like it these days. It was a society; it is a crowd; it will be a mob—I forget who did that prophetic touch, but we've reached the mob part all right.

Derby Week's always a pretty thick one. But *breffless* it's been, this one of 1914. And more dances than I can possibly remember in those fast and furious five days that end up with the Oaks. And no one even took a Whitsun breather, hardly, 'cept, of course, those poor dear overworked M.P.'s of ours—who must be even tireder than us of that boring, silly imposs. old Home Rule that nobody 'd know what to do with if they did get it.

The Russian one's *the* cult of cults this year, you know. We wear high-pointed Russian hats and tiaras, and the giant Chaliapine—" the man who's changed opera from a concert in costume into real drama "—has Mayfair at his feet. And if you haven't revelled in the purple pageantry of *Boris Godounov,* or drunk deep of the heady draught of Russian ballet, with its super-Bakst dresses and its Futurist scenery and impressionist music—well, you're just an also-ran unmitigated, a once-was of the deepest, darkest dye.

An exhaustin' business, though. Great strain on the emotions and all that, you know, and limper than the limpest lily is your Eve after a night with Prince Igor, on top of another with Petrouchka or Thamar or Cléopâtre. So *very* lurid and vivid is the immense vitality and the subtle sensuality of these Easterners.

Wonder, by the way, whether the very big fan that's just come in again is to screen the terrific transparency of the fashionable flimsiness—or what? At the *première* of that last thing in thrills, *Coq d'Or*, a certain ducal young person who shall be nameless—'cos I'm just dead sick of seeing her name—was waving a huge white one with the most industrious languor. *Very* useful, of course, to talk behind—'specially when you're saying things that seem to want a fig-leaf of sorts.

And it's not only at Drury Lane that the Russians are rushin' us off our feet. Fairly romped away with the King Edward Gold Cup—and a few other things—at Olympia, those frightfully dashing Russian officer men did. "Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare," saith the poet. And if dazzling does it . . .

Yours, my Bettinska, till the last drop in the samovar,

EVE.

DEAREST BETTY, *June 24th*, 1914.

Simply millions of debs and Americans and things dyin' to be presented at the Courts—they say the Lord Chamberlain's been fairly snowed under, poor old thing, by implorin' applicants.

Regular jam of an Ascot, too—but what *isn't* crowded this wonderful year? Absolute screams some of the new frocks were, and the weirdest draperies now disguise any fragments that remain of those womanly curves once considered, I b'lieve, abso. indispens. My get-up was the sort that 'll keep the photographers busy. "Looks to me awfully *funny!*" one man said when he saw it. So *I* know it's quite fearfully *right.*

Really think it's the fullest-up season yet. "Little" shows are off—crushes on. Hostesses telephone, "You'll come along to my little party, won't you?" And when you *do* go along there's iced air, a marquee in the garden, Casano's band, tomtits' toes on toast, and other lux. with the Bollinger for supper. One woman sent out a thousand cards for her Cup Day dance, and Piccadilly's so bunged up it takes best part of a solid hour to get from Apsley House to Bond Street—and *then* you're lucky.

'Course, all the real big entertaining these days is left to the *nouveaux riches*—and jolly well they do it, by Gad! No waxed fruits on the groaning board (you remember the Duke who did that?) when *they're* on the hospitality tack. It's what Lady L——d——y calls "this dreadful Liberal Government" that's the alleged cause of the Best People's social slackness. But sometimes I wonder.

Any rumour 'bout two Royal engagements—both with German Princes—come your way yet?

No; they didn't dance the new Lame Duck that everyone's doing at the State ball last week. Had

the polka—shades of our grandmothers !—instead. All the same, it's quite *nice*, you know. So much so, indeed, that I don't think it 'll *ever* be the rage the Tango was—unless, of course, someone writes to *The Times* and calls it indecent.

Yours, busy doing it,
EVE.

July 8th, 1914.

BEST OF BETLETS,

For once in this England frail woman is justified of her transparencies. London's an oven, Ranelagh and Hurlingham *the* dining-places, and supper trips on the river our last, best, and *chic*-est brain-wave. Postponing the last State ball and the big dances 'cos of the Court mourning for the Austrians came rather as a relief, really—though we did make a sort of a busman's holiday of it by dancing every night at the Welcome Club and other (more secluded) places.

No denying, though, the murder of the Austrian heir was a bit of a shock at Court—besides flutterin' considerable the diplomatic circles of the Near Eastern Powers. Such a very few weeks, you see, since both the Archduke and the Duchess of Hohenberg were over here—on a very pally and intimate visit to our Royals. The Duchess is morganatic, of course, but even Royalties don't bother so much about things like that in democratic England.

It's much more Ireland, though, than the Austrian affair that's at last putting a slight damper on the season. They say, you know, that what with the

shockin' situation over there—civil war more than a possibility, and Belfast and Ulster nothing more or less than armed camps, so they tell me—not to speak of the throttling of the poor dear Lords, *and* the land taxes, there hasn't been so much bad feeling between the parties for years and years and years.

Yours, takin' a breather,
EVE.

July 24th, 1914.

MY BETTY,

Things look terrible like—oh, hel-p!—a General Election in August. Which Heaven forbid! For after nearly four months of town undiluted, everyone's simply longing for Cowes and the country and such simpler joys as prop'ly belong to August and are the saving of our complexions, not to speak of our morals, which do, p'r'aps, get just the weeniest bit dog-eared, what, in the rush of a London season?

But D.V., W.P., next week's the exodus, of course. Everyone's off somewhere, and yours for ever, Betty mine, will be far, far away from this dusty town the very next time she writes to you, discoursing, not of Chaliapine, or Carpentier, or the Caillaux case, or the delights of the ever-popular chemmy, but rather of the sun on the Solent, and how my complexion's standin' the strain of air and wind and more unadulterated daylight than the poor thing's seen for months and months. Talking of the Caillaux affair, isn't it *intriguing* the way the

" temperamental " French mix up the *haute politique* and their love affairs ? Not that our Ministers don't, bless 'em ! have their little affairs too—some of 'em, anyway. But they don't give their emotions *quite* so free a hand as the Gallic lover does.

Politics permittin', the King, they say, 's to be at Goodwood. He can't do more about the Ulster business—with which, 'tween you and me, we're all so frightfully fed up that positively it's becoming one of the things one doesn't talk about.

'Bout Cowes, don't suppose the yachting 'll be wildly brilliant, but *that* doesn't matter s' long as you've got your badges for the Squadron lawns all right. 'Sides our Royals, the Spains and Prince William of Prussia will give tone to the proceedings, and the Krupps and the Kaiser are sending their racing yachts. But I don't think Kaiser Wilhelm 'll be there—you know what he is for having a finger in every pie, and he's quite a lot mixed up in this old European crisis, or whatever they call it, that's sprung from the Austrian affair.

Yours, *très fatiguée*,
EVE.

August 1*st*, 1914.

What a life, my Betty ! *Isn't* it ? Still here, you see, still penned in this dear d——d distracting town, and really, what with Ireland *and* Europe, they're positively getting monotonous—all the crisises and " situations " and things.

Quite off our feed at Goodwood, we were really,

and anyway it was one of the quietest ever. And as to Cowes—looks like being a fair *frost*, it does. Even at Goodwood all the talk was of this tiresome European unrest, and half the men were on the *qui vive* all the time, wonderin' whether they mightn't be fired off with their regiments to Co. Down or Donaghadee or some unearthly place at any moment. And as the rest of 'em, and the women too, may have to dot down to their own particular little corners of the world and put in some good hard stiff 'lectioneering—mouldy prospect, isn't it, for our so well and truly laid plans for Deauville and Le Touquet and Carlsbad and the rest ?

Faint whispers of even the Sacred Twelfth bein' interfered with (*think* of it !); but the procesh. to the North's begun, and they say the grouse-moors and deer-forests have never let so well—some of the lairds aren't half huggin' themselves. Millionaire manufacturers, shipping magnates in rows, and Hebrews in hundreds are simply pouring into Bonnie Scotland, *plus* wives and offsprings, motor-cars, servants, *and* cheque-books.

You know even wars and rumours of wars don't sound half so horrid and serious when you read about 'em in tweeds and things and over a real Scotch breakfast—scones, trout, herrings and yesterday morning's paper.

Yours, all-of-a-doodah,

EVE.

August 5th, 1914.

Oh, Betty, so it's really, *really* war! It's been the awfullest week-end . . . of course Cowes and every other plan blown to the winds utterly. One has just waited—your Eve must be at the heart of things, as well as of men! And here in London these last days the very heart of the world has seemed to beat. They were so vast, so far-reaching, the issues facing

England, our England,

one has felt as if we stood on the edge of a precipice.

Everything else has seemed dwarfed. With such great affairs at stake, even one's own small personal interests, generally so important, haven't mattered; they've been engulfed and swallowed up in the great cataclysm. No one's cared to go anywhere or do anything, or make any kind of plans. We've been like a people suffering from shock, and even the masses didn't, thank goodness, maffick over the Declaration of War—the nearest they got to it being to collect in large clumps round the Palace and at Westminster and cheer Majesties, Ministers and anyone else who turned up.

Nothing's been talked of and nothing thought about except war, and all war may mean to this little island we all, at the bottom of our unexcitable English hearts, adore so passionately and so devotedly. I suppose truly and clearly to realise the *real* depth and size and nature of this most awful European convulsion—that isn't possible

But it's been a nerve-shattering two weeks. We were all for peace, and we came to war. Truly a mad world, my masters.

Yours sadly,
EVE.

August 18th, 1914.

BETTY DEAR,

It's rather awful and frightening, isn't it, the *sudden* way things happen? Just simply doesn't seem *possible* that only a week or two ago those of us who amuse ourselves were—well, as usual just amusing ourselves! And now, so quickly, with positively giddy *volte face*, all the things that don't *really* matter, all but the essentials, have been swept clean away. Work goes on, of course—the world's business must continue, I suppose, while the world turns at all. But pleasure's suddenly at an end. The veil's been torn from our eyes very suddenly, and it's rather stilled and startled us, the glimpses of blood and sweat and agony, the ugly things and the grim realities of life. . . .

Instead of the sound of flutes, there's the menacing roll of drums. The primrose path we trod so gaily leads us now to—where? Down

the way to dusty death,

alas, for too, too many, I'm afraid! Early every morning one wakes to that sound that somehow always strangely stirs the human heart—the tread of marching feet.

It's a long, long way to Tipperary,

the men sing. Their wives and sweethearts, a little distraught and a little excited, but brave as Englishwomen are, run at their side, their officers are very grave, Vauxhall and Waterloo are alive with khaki—and tragic with women's tears ! We've all got a sort of an empty feeling, a dreadful sinking. Is there one single soul amongst us, I wonder, who won't, sooner or later, take a share in the sum of the nation's suffering ?

Life's the great adventure, isn't it ? The wonderf'lest surprise-packet of the lot. Only a month ago who could have pictured England what she is to-day ?—a country under arms, and just tense with all the strangeness of it. Which of us *dreamed* that 'stead of tramping the heather in high Scotland, or lazing on country lawns, or plunging on the tables at Deauville, even some of the *women* would really be doing some *work?* Actually, my Betty, we're even *talking* seriously. One has to be happy and secure to say the silly things, doesn't one ?

Yours, rather stunned,
EVE.

August 24th, 1914.

DEAREST BETTY,

We are fortunate here in England, where conscription has no currency. Our Fleet, that Winston so cleverly had all ready for the fray, spares us that, doesn't it ? I hear such tragic stories from Le Touquet, the now dead city that was once the gayest in France. There had been tense days, it seems, while France, once again at

war, waited—waited for England's word. And then, as the Germans poured into Belgium—they say, you know, literally in *hordes !*—came *le mobilisation*. Bad enough here, where only our Army has gone. Over there all men are soldiers. . . .

When the men were called out there were piteous scenes. A night of tragedy and preparation, of waiting and weeping, and then the men marched away, every now and again one breaking the ranks for a last embrace of wife, sweetheart, or mother. In France not only the love but the livelihood of women has to withstand the shock of war. All the breadwinners are gone to fight, and only the women are left to shoulder as best they may the care and keep of the family—in the country even to bring in the harvest and till the ground.

Here everyone's asking, of course, "What can we *do?*" "Is there anything I can *do?*" and tho' sittin' on the steps of the War Office until they get a job may be all right for the *men*, 'tween you and me, my Betty, I'm not 'tirely certain that just not to make nuisances of ourselves isn't p'r'aps the best feminine rôle just at the moment, what? We've plopped with such a fearful bang right down on to the very bedrock of things. And when one gets *there*—well, men must work and women must wait, I guess, and try not *too* often to weep.

Might refrain, f'rinstance, some of the more zealous of housekeepin' 'thusiasts, from that disgustin' panic food-buying that's been goin' on. And it wouldn't be a bad idea, you know, for some of 'em to cultivate—there bein' a war on an' all—

something in the way of an imagination. Talk about the American girl who could only remember Rome as the place she bought those silk stockings at. . . . Found one frightfully lovely female thing I know simply *fearf'ly* sick the other day 'cos the war news is crowdin' out the fashion sketches from the papers!

Really almost amusin'. The world at war don't matter 'cept that it puts off all the autumn house-parties. . . . Our men gone to France—and in such *dreadful* danger, poor darlings—only tiresome 'cos it's taken away the best "Hesitation" partners. . . . Why, even Tou-Tou's got more imagination. He gets 'spicious now, you know, when I only *spell* words like bicks and bone-y and walkie!

But picture to yourself, my Betty, such vacuity —*how* good for the complexion! Terrible wearin' to go *thinkin'* about things, and it's already beginning to be borne in on me that if you can only be *really* cow-like when there's a war on you save simply *hundreds* in face-cream. Venus may have her *affaires* with Mars, but she doesn't spoil her beautiful eyes weeping 'cos he's away on business.

Yours creamily,
EVE.

August 30th, 1914.

MY DEAR BETTY,

We're *immersed* in what *The Times* captiously calls "an unprecedented orgy of misdirected charity"! Knittin'-needles, they say, are bein' plied with more ardour than discretion, and everyone

in authority's handed out snubs wholesale to that superfluity of generous ones which is all too generously offering to the W.O.—Lord, what aren't they offering ?

Cold water was first sprinkled, I b'lieve, on the shirt-making, muffler-knitting enthusiasts. Their zeal is considered a little mistaken, 'cos—'cordin' to I don't know who, but I s'pose he (or she) knows what he's talking about—if there's one thing certain in this new war-world, it's that the poor 'll be poorer still before we're through with it, so all that they *can* rake in they ought to, before the pinch comes. Even the Queen's own pet Needlework Guild's come in for its bit of carp and criticism, and quite a sort of a small panic developed about H.M.'s appeal for garments from everybody queering the market for the *real* workers.

" Keep the workers working " is the war-cry of the moment. Better for the rich to pay the poor to do the stitchin' and the knittin' and things than risk overcrowding the Labour Market by doin' the work ourselves. And we're *'plored* to buy clothes and things as usual—'parently with the same idea. So behold Eve buyin' frocks she *really* wouldn't have, 'cept for the—er—nation's good, you know !

As to the perfect *mass* of houses, yachts, town halls, institutions and what-nots offered for hospitals, " Hold ! Enough !" shrieked the maddened 'thorities *ages* ago. But still they come. Bit ungracious, of course, to look a gift-horse in the mouth, as they say in the Bible. But the troof is, you know, so many of 'em are really fatally unsuit-

able, 'specially for wounded men, who want, above all things, light, air—and *drains!*

Been quite one of our war-time shafts of humour that—the norful revelations 'bout some of our loveliest and most historic houses (*specially* the historic ones!) havin' hardly a decent drain among 'em. Shows how fit we are, doesn't it—or p'r'aps how short a time we stay in them—that we haven't all died off like flies long ago?

It's of course for the nursin' touch—which really will be very 'portant, I suppose—that there's been the biggest rush of fervidly anxious volunteers. As Red Cross Headquarters, Devonshire House looks livelier than it has for *years*—a positive beehive of busy buzzing women, all organisin' 'emselves to the last safety-pin. But one hears of thousands bein' turned down—and none too gently—in the nursing line, too. Voluntarism's never popular with authority, I s'pose, and they say the *least* vicious *real* nurse turns a rich vermilion with rage at the mere bare *mention* of those artless "amateurs," the V.A.D.'s.

But, of course, 'tween you and me, my Betty, it's *push* and bein' slick that counts here—as elsewhere! Positively congestin' the Channel traffic, they are, so they say, the reg'lar *crowd* of smart ministerin' angel things determined whatever happens to do the pillow-smoothin' business on the fields of France—whether the R.A.M.C. wants 'em, or whether it doesn't. But I rather guess, even if they're in at the start, they won't be in at the finish—not if the war lasts three years, as Lord

Kitchener's been saying. Which I simply won't and can't believe, can you ?

Hardly a line's come through from France for days and weeks, and we're simply sickeningly anxious. One hears the most awful rumours here in London 'bout our Army retreating and the Germans in terrifying numbers, though in the country, I'm told, it's still as you say—"You'd never know England was at war." Detachment's like most virtues—can be badly overdone, don't you think so ?

Your anxious
EVE.

September 9th, 1914.

BETTY DEAR,

May we never again have to live through such dreadful weeks as these last two ! The awfullest part of this awful war's the dreadful lack, not only of war news, but of even the barest details about our men and what they're doing. All the days of sun and summer—was there *ever* a lovelier August ?—the casualties, we knew, were mounting and mounting. But there were no names, no details, hardly a letter. . . .

London's a strange, excited, waiting city. There's been nothing to do but wait and try—outside—to be brave, tho' inside we fairly shook with craven fears. But the British Army, one knew—we felt it in our bones—only retired at a cost ! So it was almost a relief when, at last, the names *did* come through, tho' it's just frightening, isn't it, all those

thousands "missing"? What has become of them? Are they alive or dead? And how does the German treat his prisoners? There are strange and horrid stories, you know, of how the Belgians fared at their hands.

And some wonderful stories, too, of that retreat from Mons. Against the German hordes there was nothing else to do, I s'pose. But they say the men hated it. To retire at all had never entered their dogged, heroic, truly British minds; to retire continuously seemed sheer wickedness. The paved French roads, one hears, wore our men's boots to shreds. They marched on their bare feet, suffering agonies from the heat and dust and the weight of their packs, which many poor souls threw away—and wanted badly again before the end. Trenches were no sooner dug than they were abandoned, and every now and again the tired-out men would have to turn and fight, always, however "done" they were, with the most amazing gallantry.

Oh, Betty, how *utterly* hateful, how cruel and wicked and *useless* war is! Losing one's men in it has a bitterness that even the most splendid consolations can't sweeten. To die in the flower of their days, to fall in the awful shambles of war just when life's so full, so utterly worth living! For the women whose babies they were, for us who are sharing with them all the joys of this delicious world—it's almost too bitter to be borne, I don't care *what* the glory. . . .

Ah, well . . . no good talking about it, is it? Must pull ourselves together. The news is there's to be

racing after all this autumn—by the King's express desire. His gees will run wherever entered. And quite right too, most people seem to think, 'cos of the mountains of unemployment there 'll be, or so they say, if we go on as we are doing—cancelling all social shows and 'tirely neglecting that lighter side of life that's other people's livelihood. But I don't know, you know. What about turnin' 'em all on to war-work, *I* say, and lettin' everything else go hang until we've won it? But of course the business-as-usualers, let-the-Army-do-the-work crowd 'd be very down on that, wouldn't they? No money in it, for one thing.

But anyway, fightin's of course the fashion. A select company of huntin' men and gentlemen jocks and things have even gone and 'listed *en bloc* (in the 19th Hussars). And quite a lot of other people, too, who couldn't get commissions on the nail, and just simply couldn't stay out of the movement a minute longer. Seems there's a bit of a glut in officers—anyway, they're turning quite a lot down. And Kitchener wants N.C.O.'s and men—hence the Public School and 'Varsity battalions they're fixing up.

The Royals visit woundeds every day, and people send "Delikatessen" to the hospitals, and I like the story of the Irish soldier's "grousing," not about his shrapnel-torn arm, but on the loss of the butterfly that was tattooed upon it—"the loikes of which I'll never see again." And for much-needed light relief we've still got, you know, those Russians. In that Cook's circular tour round

England they must simply have hated, what, those drawn blinds that prevented 'em seeing the scenery of, one gathers, practic'ly every part of the country ?

Your rather mournful
EVE.

September 24th, 1914.

DEAREST BETTY,

Latest is that we hear so little 'bout the war 'cos Kitchener won't tell the Cabinet nuffing ! One visions Mr. Asquith and Mr. Churchill and Sir Edward Grey playing noughts and crosses, and readin' over and over again " How to be Useful in War-Time," while the C.-in-C. runs the whole war silently and alone. And keeps wrop in myst'ry even the whereabouts—somewhere in France—of those high-born " nurses " I told you of, unofficially " at the Front." Tho' they now say, you know, that it wasn't after all the unsusceptible, incorruptible K. of K. who so improperly declared these " no times to be bothering about duchesses," and described as of " no importance " the present residence of her Grace of —— in particular. But it cert'nly *sounds* like him, doesn't it ?

They say, tho', it's fairly prostratin' the officials, headin' off (1) the fearfully patriotic women who want to go and " do things " at the Front, and (2) the wire-pullers who are movin' Heaven and Earth to get their men nice cushy jobs—if poss somewhere about Whitehall. And there's no cooling off yet in the craze for stitchin' and knittin' that's simply ragin' in less important circles. Two hectic

patriots were actually knitting the other day at one of the theatre First Nights that are breakin' out again. Others walk about "purling"—I don't know what it is, but I know they do it. And they say in Suburbia you positively can't hear yourself *think* for the deafening click of the knitting-needles —and the clash of conversation (and tea-cups) that seems a 'nevitable accompaniment.

At one's club and other feminine haunts clumps simply sky-high of fearsome garments (of a really terrifyin' "usefulness"!) lie about on desks and things—the harvest, of course, of that laudable desire to "do something" which burns so persistently in every female heart these days. I trust, though, that the destined wearers like to be clad—er—"sensibly" 's I b'lieve the word. There is, you know, a story of how one *brave Belge* used the luvly "warm woollen combies" (ugh!) her charitable hosts gave her to—— But foreigners don't understand how *damp* this climate is, do they?

Reminds me, perfectly 'stonishing, the *tons* of money people still have to burn—or give away—even in these hard times. The Prince of Wales's Fund's already well into its third million, and the Queen's Work for Women Fund and the Belgian Fund and the Red Cross Fund and goodness knows how many other funds are all positively bursting with fullness. And as to that idea of how much poorer the war was bound to make the poor dear poor—hasn't happened *yet*, anyway.

"'Aven't been so comferable not for *years*, I 'aven't!" is the verdict on present circs by a

reservist's wife of cook's acquaintance. The lady, you see, now draws on about a million different "relief" funds—on top of her separation allowance and anything she's inclined to earn on her own. And as, for years, the head of the household had always "drunk" most of the family income . . .

Well, good thing this horrid war's doin' good to someone, what?

A lot of chat's passin' 'bout the alien enemy we still unbelievably cherish in such thousands in our confiding midst. You'd think even the so trusting 'ficial mind would see the obvious danger of him, or anyway realise that he's eating up—not to speak of storing—the food we surely *ought* to be keepin' for ourselves. There's a nice idea—much too nice for the authorities, I'm afraid—of 'ranging them all round gasworks and places to guard against bombs, or, anyway, letting 'em have first taste of what brother Hun's givin' us. And it's a sure thing, too, our careful rulers won't carry out an ever so much better plan—which is to put 'em all on to captured ships, give 'em a good push, and let 'em float—or sink.

The days are drawin' in and the theatres are buckin' up and people are "getting used to war," tho', what with the woundeds here and that awful, deadly war over there, it's not so fearf'ly easy. But the masses, you know, the great, unthinking, unimaginative masses, still don't realise, not a bit, what's *really* happening, and what *must* happen before it's over. "Be in Berlin by Christmas!" you hear even fairly *intelligent* people saying. And

as for grasping even the *beginning* of all war means, as one who knows the real thing has just remarked, "Might be a movie show for all some people think of it!"

Still, the new eleven o'clock closing time's anyway remindin' people there's a war—it's so strange to see Piccadilly with half its lights out and all the restaurants in Stygian darkness before midnight. And the searchlights on the watch for Zeppelins are also a reminder. But they're rather like Tou-Tou, more ornamental than useful—at present.

Yours, trying to be both,

EVE.

September 30th, 1914.

BELOVED BETTY,

Don't think there'll be much need to write a History of the War, do you? Not for this generation's reading, anyway. It's all so tragic and so awful, and so 'normously dramatic to boot, that the story will be written on our hearts—like Calais on Queen (B——y) Mary's.

But I suppose in this big, big world there will always be some—like those women, wonderf'ly arrayed, who, so they say, carouse in the wake of the Ministry in France's new capital, Bordeaux, *qui n'ont pas de famille, qui sont des gens qu'on ne voit jamais en deuil.* And here in England it's even now sometimes difficult to realise we're at war, tho' the Cabinet call never so eloquently "To Arms! To Arms!" and in all the open places the new recruits are drilling to the hoarse, quick words of command.

Truth is, of course, we're almost too safe and snug and secure, what, we island people ? We grow content and unimaginative here in our sea-bound, ship-guarded England, where even now we hear nothing of that " numbing hurricane of steel " and all the crushing, crashing, hellish din of war. Still, we *are* beginning to feel just a few pin-pricks. F'r-instance, the sad scarcity of men-servants, even in places where once they swarmed.

It's orful ! You remember the American duchess's and the Bugheims' ? One walked their marbled halls 'twixt positive phalanxes of gorgeous young giants, the perfect curves of whose silk-clad calves gave gallant testimony to the quantity and quality of their reg'lar six meals a day in the servants' hall. 'Cos of the old war, a butler, the more senile the better, or a youth or two " under military age," are now almost the extent of the indoor male staffs in even the most moneyed mansions, and I *did* hear of some almost ultrapatriots givin' up their valets and lettin' the second housemaid press their trousers. But even patriotism has perhaps its limits.

After that interminable retreat and the frightful odds our men have been up against, yes, isn't the turn in the tide a *blessed* relief ? But we don't dare even now to be too glad, and there've been no " rejoicings," thank goodness, for against this inhuman enemy the game of war's turning out less of a game even than usual. All the terror of it, these unending battles, the grinding, nerve-racking struggle, Rheims, Louvain, Termonde, the long list

of atrocities, the firing on the Red Cross, the spying here at home, the breaking of treaties, the mines scattered on the sea's highways—it's almost blotting out even the beauty of this beautiful world. And *quel farce*, what, the civilisation we've always talked so much about ?

Yours, *full* of hate,
EVE.

October 7th, 1914.

DEAR BETTY,

The Battle of the Aisne has, as someone's said, almost ceased to be a battle and become " a war in itself." And as if we hadn't 'citements enough, there's rumours in clumps—every day a new one, or at least an old one improved. And it's a dull dog of a guest indeed who dines out without, anyway, a rumourlet to retail, with or without trimmings.

The Russians, I think, have had their little day. But we're goin' stronger than ever on spies—specially, I'm told, at the clubs, where they do talk such a lot, don't they ? And the very latest German governess found with " incriminating documents " in her " box " is said to have only *just* left the hearth and home of a 'ficial who comes quite *brefflessly* near the very topmost place of all. Daren't *whisper* his name, of course, even to you; but as his wife and daughters are *the* chattiest people in London, and *must* talk if the heavens fall . . .

The East Coast, of course, is where the alien

enemy fairly *swarms*—gettin', as you know, practically the same freedom and *quite* as much consideration as the Britisher himself. 'Strawdin'ry people, *aren't* we? Since the North Sea disaster the wildest stories have got about. Some people quite seriously declare that there are spies actually in the inner circles of Whitehall itself—"there must be, or would we positively *cherish* the alien in our midst?" And, of course, it isn't the little German clerks and waiters and things, but the rich lot in high places, who get about in society and are so very important financially, that are *really* dangerous.

Hear the stricter lighting orders—London's getting darker and darker o' nights, for they *do* say there was a Zeppelin *quite* near last week—may be 'scribed as not *altogether* unconnected with the war-time attitude of certain smart hotels. At least three of 'em—curiously enuff, all with a German manager—have been lighting up as brightly as ever while all the rest of London was darkened. Can't accuse our officials of overdoin' it in the way of brightness anyway, can we?

Yours, *very* suspish,
EVE.

October 21*st*, 1914.

DEAREST BETTY,

What's been christened "the Antwerp week-end" has been a stern chastener of our spirits. And the treachery in South Africa, on top of the fearful wearingness of no news at all from the Front, fairly put the lid on it.

Still, here in London, save for the darkness, you'd even now hardly know we were at war—not from any outward and visible signs, anyway. *Thés Dansants* are still going merrily in Bond Street and elsewhere, you just can't move at the Savoy for the dancing supper crowds, and "There wasn't a seat in the house," I heard, on the very day that "impregnable" Antwerp fell, at a theatre where a German musical comedy is being run by a Hun proprietor.

But at Ostend, such is the rush of our wounded, they say they've been performing operations without chloroform—the supply of *everything*, doctors and nurses as well as medical necessities, is quite unequal to the demand. The W.O., I suppose, is doing its best, and everyone says the heroism of the R.A.M.C. in the field is simply wonderful. But it's all been a million-times-bigger thing than anyone ever imagined, and our poor men, of course, are the sufferers for the muddle.

And meantime—well, really, you know, Betty, I'm not sure there isn't a limit in war-time to the Business-as-Usual, *Everything*-as-Usual idea. Life must go on, of course, even in the midst of the dreadfullest of wars. But it's really seemed hardly decent—the rush to Scotland, the crowd at the Cesarewitch, and the *swarms* shopping, theatreing, motoring and feeding just as usual everywhere, while over there it's all we can do to keep our end up against the Hun and things are so awf'ly critical and difficult. It's a much more in-the-picture, tho' a rather touching sight—all those hundreds of

thousands of our civilian men drilling away so intently in all the squares and open places everywhere. Most are hardly even in uniform yet, the rush on the factories and shops has been so tremendous. But they're all tryin' so *very* hard to be soldiers, poor dears, that sometimes they nearly make me cry, they do.

Doesn't make things 'zacly easier for them, you know, that such a lot of the men who rushed to the colours are the kind that aren't used to discomfort. Roughing it in camps and sticking it in fearf'ly leaky huts is a stiff strain on the quality of patriotism, and some poor dears who've never slept before in anything but fine linen I'm told find the frequent liveliness of the army blanket not the least of life's new crosses. But they've done a good five months' work in five weeks, they say, such is their martial ardour, at which rate we'll really have an army by Christmas, won't we? And, 'cording to the optimists, it's just about by that date, too, you know, that we'll also be starting on the long, long road to—no, not Tipperary, but Berlin.

Women, too, of course, are really getting through quite a lot of war-work, and "comforts" are going out to the troops and the Navy in such billions they say the ports are blocked with 'em. In the race to be charitable, seems only the motor-car owners aren't quite coming up to the scratch. Cars are simply dreff'ly wanted in France, 'specially for the wounded. But walk down Piccadilly any fine morning or afternoon and you can still count in

hundreds the cars *de luxe* carrying ladies *de luxe* to nowhere in particular.

Yours, nearly dead knittin',
EVE.

November 11th, 1914.

MY DEAR BETTY,

It's not much more than three months really—but since I wrote to you of anything but war, what a lifetime, isn't it? The things that mattered then don't matter now at all; the world's topsy-turvy, nothing's quite the same. Theories have been swept away, only facts remain. We've gone back to the pseudo-primitive, everyone-fighting-everyone-else stage, and every day there's more war—more and more and more, until it really very nearly *is* a world-war. Now Turkey's afire, on the other side of the fence, alas! And well within scorching distance Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, the Balkan States, Holland and—yes, even America.

How horrible war is! Everything gentle and sweet set aside. The beautiful human body not a temple any more, but just food for cannon. And battle, murder and sudden death the whole way of life. Almost beyond bearing it's become, these golden autumn days—the terrible tale of that desperate fight for Calais. An inhuman struggle, as Sir Neville Lyttelton calls it, with slaughter on both sides too frightful for words.

Through it all our men, always sorely outnumbered, but always fighting like lions, are being, they say, simply wonderful. Undergoing un-

imaginable fatigues and discomforts, and in some places, they say, at such close quarters with the enemy that they were fighting desperate hand-to-hand bayonet tussles over the edge of their trenches. And not only the old regular Army, but also those gallant others, the Territorials, at whom we sometimes used to laugh a little—they, too, have covered themselves in glory. Did you read General Smith-Dorrien's message to their women ?

> Never was there such desperate fighting . . . never have troops behaved so magnificently. . . . Learn to appreciate them at their true value. . . . Proud as I am to have such soldiers under my command, you should be prouder still to be near and dear to such men. . . .

To earn such praise from their General—oh, Betty, what glorious things our men must be doing ! But at what a price; what a bitter, bitter price !

The angel of death is so busy reaping, and it's such a tragically youthful harvest that he's gathering in ! They say war cleanses, washes away the clogging mists of peace, and I suppose it does—with blood and tears. But, oh, the broken hearts, the lonely homes. . . . For women, as Lady Frances Balfour says, the war is never over. A soldier dies but once, but the women that loved him live on with a sword in their hearts and a lifetime of empty days and lonely nights before them.

And as for comfort—what comfort can there be for the wives and mothers of those who were " the young, the brave, the lusty," but now lie on the fields of France just clay and nothingness ? Talk

to them of the future, of the days when Time the great Consoler will have done his work? One cannot even do that, for in sorrow such as this there isn't any future—there's only the cruel present, and the past before pain came.

Poor wives! Poor mothers! Poor lovers! The light of their world's gone out, and it hardly comforts them to know that but for the darkness that encompasses them England might be in darkness too. Life's not a bit like philosophy, for life's just living, isn't it? And these mourning women—the wives who looked forward even to growing old if side by side with their men, the mothers who spent on their dead sons all the secret ardour of women—are alive just now to nothing but pain.

Did you read Lady Kinloch-Cooke's verses? They say what many women are thinking just now:

> A little while—your grave will be o'ertrodden,
> Soon the frail cross have fallen in the breeze;
> No loving hands are there to tend and cherish
> That grave in foreign soil beyond the seas.
>
> "Somewhere in France"—oh, surely, my beloved,
> Tho' sign and token all be swept away,
> It is not in that land of desolation,
> But in my heart that you will rest alway.

This is a drefful sad letter, isn't it, but to-day I feel like—who was it? The King who Never Smiled Again. Even frocks—imagine it, Betty!—even *frocks* have lost their flavour. Which proves what I've always said, our clothes express better than anything our feelings. Happy and gay, then glad rags, please, to match. But sad, as we are

now, then we really hardly care *what* we look like. And, anyway, women dress for men—and men are scarce, and will be scarcer.

Yours, in sackcloth,
EVE.

November 25th, 1914.

DEAREST BETTY,

The talk was all of invasion last week, and of how the enemy was going to do it—new guns to outrange and sink our Dreadnoughts; other monsters to carry to the coast from Belgium; huge submarines as transports for troops; giant Zeppelins to terrify us from above with bombs; mines laid in our own home waters; cutting off our food-supplies, etc., etc. All 'xtremely interestin', isn't it? There seems only one thing they've forgotten—and that's a little item known as the British Navy!

This week the topic touches nearer home. "I want more men and still more men," says Lord Kitchener. And the question is—will they come or must they be fetched? But people don't seem to think it'll *really* be conscription pure and simple. A Liberal Government that's suddenly become twice as popular as ever would hardly risk such a t'rific revolution unless it felt absolutely driven to it, what?

And, of course, it *would* be rather a pity. With the greatest voluntary army ever raised, it 'd be awf'ly splendid to go on the same way, wouldn't it? Tho' in the end I dare say it doesn't make such a lot of diff as we think—whether an army's

a conscript or the other kind, I mean. And in any case I'm afraid it's very unbusiness-like and p'r'aps the slackers' opportunity. One's got to remember, of course, that most people never *do* do anything unless someone just simply *makes* them.

P'r'aps there'd be more voluntarism if there were a little more consideration. In quite the early days, d'you remember, someone recalled the old cavalry command after some special effort, "Men, make much of your horses!" He recommended the same as not at all a bad recipe for use in the treatment of the rather sore, rather strange, and *very* mis'ble new recruit!

By the way, spite of all the rumours, invasion any old time, and spies everywhere, and the war costin' a million a day, and talk of an income-tax of 3s. 6d. in the pound—spite of everything, those who sit in the seats of the mighty were all very bright and cheery at the first war Lord Mayor's Banquet. The great K. of K. roared gently as any sucking dove, and was really, for him, quite chatty as he sat between Winston and the P.M. And as for our "romanesque" Mr. Asquith (that's the last thing said about him)—he was romanesquer than ever. Drank with proper appresh the City's luscious wines, had two good goes at the Loving Cup and rolled out sonorous syllables about "preserving a temper of equanimity," all in his *best* style.

But the Lord Mayor's feed isn't half such a rare old feast, you know, as the mass imagines. There's turtle soup, of course; but, after all, what's soup?

And I b'lieve hot fish. But after that a sort of cold collation—thing I simply loathe myself. And people sitting next to their wives too. Dreff'ly depressin'.

In any case, really not a time for feastin', this, is it ? There was no dining and wining to open Parliament, where, I hear, no one 'zacly *rushed* to embrace the suggestion that members should devote their £8 per week to war relief funds. And really, I suppose, such a very teeny weeny drop in the ocean wouldn't be much good in a war " expensive beyond any war that has ever been seen in this world."

Yours soberly,

EVE.

December 5th, 1914.

MY BETTY,

I knew it 'd come. And it has. Nursing's the fashion. A nurse's uniform's awf'ly 'tractive, you know. Men *like* waists, and caps put on with *chic* rather enhance than otherwise the kind of optic of which, as Shakespeare says:

> Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye
> Than twenty of their swords. . . .

And when there are no gay games going you may as well play good ones, mayn't you ? One must do something, and it's all in the movement, which is always pleasant. You'll note, though, it's not exactly the wallflower group amongst our maidens who've rushed into the Florence Nightingale business. The shy birds are still shy (or else V.A.D.'s),

and the other ones the other thing. After all, the war doesn't work *miracles*.

By the way, some of our men are awful sick at K.'s new order about three or four months' sick leave to be taken by the woundeds, and some of 'em to stay here altogether to train the new men in *real* war. One dear thing of tender years could be *seen* thinking, "Well, if you *lose* the bally war, don't blame me, that's all!"

Reminds me, warm tales from the Salisbury Plain front, 'bout those gay lads, the Canadians. Thirty thousand of 'em are encamped in the mud down there learning discipline and, I guess, cursing our climate, poor dears. They say their officers want more training than the men. Democracy's not p'r'aps the best of atmospheres to breed soldiers to fight Germans in.

Winter's fairly rushed in. Snow in the North, and across the Channel awful blasts and blizzards to add to the general horrid discomfort of life as lived in the fighting-line. Over here our soldier men burst with one accord into the short, yellow, blanket overcoat they call the British Warm; and lovely woman, tho' she still leaves uncovered her chest to all the winds of heaven, emerged enveloped from top to toe in the skins of every furred and fluffy beastlet you can think of.

Woolwork, by the same token, has broken out again *very* furious—in all the world, I wonder, are there sheep enough to keep the knitters knittin'? But our place is to be Home, Sweet Home this winter evidently, for I've just heard from a Staff

man who came over for poor Lord Roberts's funeral that the regiment of women over there wants no reinforcements at present. At least two, I'm not sure it wasn't three duchesses, he said, crossed with him on the Boulogne boat, and heaps of lesser ladies, all intent, of course, on nursin' the wounded. "The Murderesses" I hear they've nicknamed some of the worst terrors, and they're very cross 'cos of the new searching regulations at Victoria. Very drastic, I b'lieve, and a chilly business strippin' these days, too. But no doubt you can avoid the very worst if you wear a few huge red crosses somewhere about you and take at least two maids and a footman.

Yes, the P. of W.'s gone to the Front at last—there "wasn't no holdin' of 'im," they say, but of course he'll be on the Staff, and so avoid the worst risks. Here's luck to the dear boy, anyway. These days of deeds are the days of the young, days to make history in. "Isn't it luck for me to be born so's I'd be just the right age and just in the right place ?" That's what a young cavalry officer man's just written from the Front. And we've been smiling over the snotty's letters:

> It's awful for Reg being kept at Harrow while this is going on, but I've written to try and cheer him up by saying the war is certain to last two years, by which time he'll be able to join in.

To be young, and to hold in one's hands the future of the world—intoxicating, isn't it ?

All the same, it's a bit alarmin'—the growing bloodthirstiness of the younger generation. Over-

heard at the breakfast table from the lips of a very small niece in deep converse with a very big soldier uncle: "But you can mow them down *much* better when they come along in *clumps*, can't you ?"

Yours, quite in sympathy,
EVE.

December 15*th*, 1914.

MY DEAR BETTY,

Don't know how you feel about it, but as for me, I'm gettin' positively puffed up with

. . . pride, rank pride
And haughtiness of Soul !

Always *was* fearf'ly proud to be English. Now—well, if I'm gettin' fairly unbearable it's the fault of Sir John French and those men of ours—the "finest soldiers on earth," as Sir John calls them—who've won through so far in the "most arduous task ever assigned to British soldiers," that Homeric struggle to defend the Channel ports.

The King's been to the Front and khaki's fashionabler than ever. *So* funny, in England, to see so many uniforms—which has always been the *first* thing the pukka soldier-man got out of, hasn't it ? And we're even getting a stage farther—instead of the khakied crowd feeling "conscious," it's now the muftied multitude that feels something wants explaining. That's why such lots, I s'pose, are sportin' medals and badges and things. Want to show they're helpin' somehow with the war.

And talk about manners makin' man—you should

see what khaki and brown leather's done for even the mousiest and weediest! By the way, swords are at a premium—doesn't it sound slaughterish? I'm told that in one battalion there's only one sword to go round. When there's a church parade the officer in charge just has to rush round and borrow *the* sword—which comes well up his leg if he's tall and trails on the ground if he's little. At the Front, tho', they're hardly worn at all now.

They've a habit, it seems, of getting in the way and tripping you up, and a rifle now's the wear for officers and men. Not so ornamental, but *much* more useful—'specially *with* bayonet.

"A soldier with a beard—how funny!" I heard someone say of H.M. when he first faced the light in khaki. But we've seen plenty of soldiers with beards since then, tho' they're not, of course, 'zacly intentional. Such sights some of 'em are when they arrive at Victoria on their ninety-six hours' leave—and *what* a lick they tear off at to get a bath (Turkish generally) and a *real* luxurious shave, and the first real good clean down they've had for weeks and weeks and weeks.

Talkin' of sights and beards and things, Tou-Tou and me are always fearf'ly interested watchin' the Volunteer men in the Park of a morning wearin' their best

> Nobody knows how bored we are,
> And nobody seems to care

expression, and going through their paces, forming fours like mad, and doublin' and chargin' and doing

Swedish exercises and things till I reely b'lieve they could *cry*, poor things.

Idea is, of course, that they *might* come in useful one day, on the East Coast—when the Germ arrives. Meantime, it's quite excitin' there—not a light shown on pain of fearful penalties, from dusk till dawn; and miles of barbed wire.

Give the chance of a lifetime, of course, invasion, won't it, to that newest thing in female armies—Lady Castlereagh's Women's Volunteer Reserve. I'm told they're simply *fearf'ly* business-like. Drill and double and form fours and all the rest of it *every* day—makes one almost sorry for the Germ, doesn't it ? And we're all learnin' to shoot, you know—I don't quite know why, but I'd rather like it if the old rifles didn't *hurt* so. Makes my shoulders black and blue, it does, and uses up *pots* of Crème Simon.

But if things turn out as some people seem to hope they will—well, we'll soon be able to drop the Amazonian touch and become just mere weak women again. The enemy, so they say, has failed in all his chief objects and now's fighting for terms —which he thinks he'll get more favourable before things go farther, and prob'ly worse, for him. But it all sounds to me rather " made in Holland." I don't trust these neutrals. And even if the Germ wanted peace, would Russia accept it ? Would we ? I *don't* think. Germany started the ball rolling, but she's not going to stop it when *she* thinks she will. We haven't sacrificed all our

dear, brave men, and poured out our best for that.

Yours bloodthirstily,
EVE.

December 28th, 1914.

DEAREST BETTY,

Pouf! It's over. And—well, yes, thanks for kind inquiries, we *did* manage to keep our spirits fairly well up to proper Christmas level after all. The toast of toasts, of course, was

To absent friends!

and for some of us, p'r'aps,

If we laughed at any mortal thing
'Twas that we might not weep . . .

as we thought of the men who'd never spend Christmas with us again, and the men still "living dangerously" for our sakes. But khaki was the guest of guests over here, too, of course, and where that is downheartedness is not. These war-wine-and-women 'thusiasts go on the principle that "the most wasted of all days is that one on which we do not laugh." And as a soldier-man's just asked me, "What good does grizzling do, anyway?"

By the way, not much "grizzling," but lots of cold—or is it hot?—fury at the *cheek* of those Germs bombarding Scarborough. It was our very first little taste here in England of what war's like, and some of us were rather glad in a way—I mean,

why *shouldn't* we share just for a moment what our men suffer all the time ?

'Minds me, *did* you hear they're fox-huntin' at the Front ? Gr-r-r-reat idea, isn't it ? And typically British, what ? But they don't believe in all work and no play, of course, at Sir John French's H.Q. They say several Red Cross ladies followed too—which shows they're not risking harm to their health by too much work on anything, doesn't it ? And *wasn't* it clever of 'em 'membering to take their habits with them, as well, they say, as their Pekes and maids and things ? Just mere or'nary nurses, you know, would *never* have thought of that.

Really *rather* amusin', you know, the way one 'mediately gets oneself up in nurse's kit (sort of), and gets photographed for the papers the moment you've lent your house or rolled a bandage or been *near* a wounded ? Some of us wear our pearls—what ho !—'magine a *real* nurse in a real hospital sportin' her one thousand guinea string the while she blanket-bathed the coal-heaver ! But I'm not sure that the untrained war nurses' day isn't rather on the wane already. Lord Knutsford, the hospital man, 's been complaining that she's too aggressive and " doesn't wear her uniform modestly," and the President of the Trained Nurses' Council clinches a difficult situation with the meaty remark that if these fancy nurses *aren't* interferin' in the hospital work their presence is superfluous; and if they *are*, then they're doing work they're not prop'ly trained for.

Bit of a scream, isn't it, all the talk 'bout how the war's goin' to change us all, how no one's to be vulgarly rich any more, and we're even ('cordin' to the prophets) going to

> Behave ourselves at table:
> At least, as far as we are able.

What a *dull* show the after-the-war supper-party will be! And our clothes, too, are to be put into the melting-pot. No more flesh-pink chiffon undies and diamond-sewn slippers, and the rest. As to which, once more, *je ne pense pas.* Course the war's changed things—and 'll do so plenty more, I guess, before it's all over. But it won't change human nature. In fact, you never can tell, shouldn't be surprised to see more of it than ever—after. Swing of the pendulum, don't you know.

They darkened London still more for Christmas; we'll positively take our lives in our hands when we go to the Savoy to see the New Year in, and drink my Christmas toast—

> Here's a health to us,
> And hell to the Germs.

But since those naval victories the other day things have bucked up considerable. Prince's looked almost like old times on Sunday afternoon, and they've reopened Murray's and I b'lieve the Lotus, and the Four Hundred's never closed. And as to the ten o'clock "closing time," that only means, of course, that 'stead of fizz you imbibe—er—ginger ale (out of a jug) from the fatal hour onwards. Must be 'strawdin'ry good ginger ale, too, 'cos it's

hardly any cheaper than the other thing. These are great times for the restaurateur.

Yours fizzily,
EVE.

January 2nd, 1915.

BETTY MINE,

What an age we live in, don't we? Not a crawler 'zacly, is it? And if it's a bit of a scorcher to *us*, what must they make of it, the few, poor dear, old-fashioned, go-slow, put-the-clock-back souls that are left—well, words fail me.

But there'll be no need to read fairy-tales or H. G. Wells and things after that Christmas Day combat at Cuxhaven, what? War in the sky, war on the sea, war under the sea, war over it! Revelations aren't in it! And it even made earth-tied armies seem out of date and a bit mouldy—only useful for police purposes, like the ten-year-old guns and warships.

Now comes the 'ficial order to keep under cover, "preferably in basements," if we hear the pop o' guns over old London. And it's not a century quite, is it, since our grandfathers thought the poor innocent puff-puff not only an immorally new-fangled and indecently hurried, but a very dangerous way of getting about?

Can almost remember myself, can't you, when even motoring got rather the frozen optic in town? Now you're not in the movement if you can't drive a racing car, haven't been up in a 'plane, and haven't at least *views* on polygamy. And on top

of everything—now the fashions have gone and changed again. Takes some keepin' up with, life does these days, doesn't it ?

We're now, best beloved, to be fluffy. The Mrs. Noah touch is dead. My latest came home this morning, and Tou-Tou, dear sweet duck, quite thought it was a new game—there's such a lot of skirt and nearly a mile of fur on it. Not sure that I'm dead keen on the changed shape. But *that's* not the point, is it ? Fashion's fashion and must be obeyed. Flout her and—well, no one 'll look at you, that's all. The successful life's a spangled path from frock to frock. Wear the wrong one and you might as well be dead.

Talking of clothes, Delysia's "undressing" act at the Ambassadors is vastly popular with visitors from the trenches—dear, simple things men are, aren't they ? Content foreverandever with the same dear old gags—so long, of course, as she's pretty ! Drury Lane is another *rendezvous* for our gallant woundeds and on-leavers. Not to have cast off dull care and heard Mr. George Graves—er—singing all about Sister Susie Sewing Shirts for Soldiers, and how

> . . . the soldiers send epistles
> Saying they'd rather sit on thistles,

is to have had one's New Year education neglected.

They say there's going to be a hell of a dust-up 'bout the Kitchener's Army Huts, and that K.'s going to court-martial a contractor. *Hope* he will, I'm sure. It's beginning to be not the least awful side of war, the way some people are using flesh and

blood to make money out of; and of all the crying scandals this one's *the* worst.

Must fly. Am nursing—no, not Red Cross. Tou-Tou. He's got the awf'lest morning-after-the-night-before nose—hot as hell 'stead of cold as Krismus, as it gen'ly is. To start with, he went to too many Christmas parties—where he fairly fetched 'em, I give you my word, lookin' a perfectly *infectious* duck in a vaster-than-ever regimental bow, doing a *very* hard patriotic balancing trick I've taught him.

Then, rashly, I took the dear thing with me to the Savoy on New Year's Eve, and there they would stuff him with turkey and *marrons glacés* dipped in fizz till he got so 'cited and was so fearful noisy that he was very nearly turned out. Prob'ly would have been, only there were several people worse. Did I tell you, by the way, that the angel barks "Tipperary" already—or nearly, that is. He got the first two notes,

It's a . . .

simply splendidly yesterday when I powdered his eye in mistake for my nose. The mornings *are* so dark, aren't they?

Your tired
EVE.

DEAREST BETTY, *January 20th*, 1915.

When we're not discussin' Zep scares, what everyone wants to know now is—what's bein' done about the raising of that reserve army everyone

knows we've got to have if we're going to keep our end up ? The Commons are still on holiday and—well, K. never *did* tell the public all it asked to be told, and at his time of life s'pose you can't expect him to begin. And Downing Street's 'fessed to the completest unpreparedness, as well as a positively childlike ignorance of everything that was happening in Europe last August. And on the can-the-leopard-change-his-spots principle, question of the moment is, are they preparin' and do they know all *now ?*

As for us—me and Tou-Tou are both so depressed we're really in two minds whether we won't join the " Murderesses " or not. It's a lifetime since we spent this dreary month in the land that I love, and think, my Bets, if it weren't for this horrid war, where we'd be this very day—in sunny, snowy, silvery Switzerland, " where there are so few gentlemen and such a lot of waiters," and where the baths in the gaudy pubs cost simply lakhs of francs a time !

Where (and these are the Reminiscences of Eve !) —where you luge and tumble, skimming giddily down and sweating slowly up the little hills and the big ones; where you ski down the slopes in the moonlight and race for cocktails before dinner; and do " turns " and " telemarks " (if you can) and shriek (anyway) " *Achtung !*" and " *Attention !*" in the wild exuberance of your spirits. Where you skate, and play bandy, and do " rockers," and flirt outrageously, and eat *tons.* Oh ! . . .

And afterwards on the *Côte d'Azur*, behavin' a

little better! Bathin' in the blessed blazing sunshine and wearin' civilised clothes and silk stockings in place of the woolly wild ones of winter sport. And playin' lawn tennis and baccarat, and drinkin' fearf'ly 'spensive teas, and turnin' up like angels at the English church on Sunday morning—and dancing in the Casino Sunday nights. M'p's—ah, well . . . And this year we're here and all the dear men are "there." Oh, Betty, it's a *horrid* world, isn't it?

Not, of course, that I don't love the dear old top *really*, however badly she behaves. Always mitigations—getting married, f'rinstance. There's a positive *rush* of weddings. Love and war seem to go together, and lots, you know, are gettin' off whom we'd really almost given up hope for—so weak and 'ceptible are the men home to be nursed or petted, and so captivating woman "when pain and anguish wring the brow."

This (from one of the returned ones) is *rather* nice, I think, 'bout how England's bossing things in France. A man was travelling through the lines with a pass signed by Joffre himself. All went well till he met a British Tommy guarding one of the roads. "Wot's this?" inquired our gallant defender coldly. "This ain't no good, you know. We don't know nothink about this. Why, it's written in French!"

Your loving, but depressed,

EVE.

February 1st, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

Now that those old Zeppelins have really come at last—well, doesn't seem to me that we're so very much forrader, what ? Still, it's poss even Cab. Ministers don't sleep quite so quietly in their little beds these days, and I've cast away my pearls (into the bank), and taken (so's to be armed against every 'mergency) to wearing pyjamas—"flesh" *crêpe de Chine*, best beloved, and *très* dinky, I give you my word.

More evidence, tho', isn't it, that the Age of Chivalry is indeed an also-ran. Of all unsporting pastimes, modern warfare positively *takes* it. Time was when only the fighting man took fighting risks. *Nous avons changé tout cela.* Now you and me and even darling Tou-Tou's in the war-zone.

The new fighting, too—no clash of arms or banners of glory, but only *such* a burrowing and ferreting. And all in slush and slime and mud so overwhelmin' and penetrating that it almost discolours, so the poor dears tell me, even life itself. They're *all* going through it. "The nights are very long, the sky is very grey, and the decks are *very* wet," Sir John Jellicoe writes from one of those "somewheres" in the North Sea where in gales and rain and snow and heavy seas, and everything that's horrid, our b'loved sailor-men watch and wait. And from Flanders someone asks: "Could any other country attain to such pewter-greyness of land and sea and sky ? The mud permeates everything, cold,

clinging, and so persistent that no mud ever seen before seems real."

They all agree it's "beastly," and they're not all, p'r'aps, *quite* so awf'ly cheery, you know, as they try to make us believe—for war's war, alas! and the sooner we realise it the better, seems to me. But they hardly indulge even in the warrior's privilege of grousing, our wonderful soldier and sailor men. The wind and the rain, and the dirt and discomfort, and the boredom and the weariness . . . it's all part of the show, and they're all prepared to stick it—till kingdom come if they must.

Or, anyway, till Kitchener's New Army rolls up, which 'minds me, there *is* one thing I'm told that *does* rather put the soldier-man's back up, and that's the home-staying optimist who minimises a frightful and terrific war and so makes light of our men's superhuman pluck and endurance. You know him, of course—that hopeless idiot, the *too* optimistic, I mean. And you know his fatuous beliefs—that we're "easily" on top (easily!); that we've got the German "on the run" (he doesn't say which way); and that in any case the enemy army is now entirely made up of either very young or else very old men, all poor shots, poor soldiers, poor patriots, badly fed, badly equipped and badly officered into the bargain.

The man out there mayn't know everything. But I guess he does know a *little* more than the man who's stayed at home, what? And what *he* says is that the Germ's "wonderful." Their army's "as near perfection as possible," a V.C. officer-man

thinks. And as to their shooting—"Don't you believe," a gunner tells me, "these yarns about the enemy being rotten shots. It's all bilge."

'Nother not too popular person "out there" is he, snug at home, who would bar all drinks for soldiers. One fanatic actually wanted 'em to imbibe the country's water—in Flanders of all places! Where they're just moving heaven and earth tryin' to keep down typhoid. . . . The punishment a soldier-man would give an M.P. creature who wants to dock him of his morning tot of rum—sometimes the one "comforting" portion the poor dears get in the whole long weary day—is "Put him in the firing-line for a day or two, and after the second day, when he was hungry, tired, wet through and nearly frozen, ask him which he'll have—some lemonade or a Seidlitz powder!"

Yours not teetotally,

EVE.

February 20th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

Are we downhearted? My *word*; no! And you *should* see us goin' about o' nights with our little 'lectric lamps like a lot of perambulatin' glow-worms. But this week's the week, you know, when the Germ's to start his very last word in frightfulness by blockadin' our coasts and runnin' amuck amongst the shippin'.

Mostly bluff, people seem to think, but I'm not so sure, you know. Just as well, anyway, to take prompt measures, even if it is a try-on. So our

neutral-flag *riposte* is popular. And talkin' of shipping, just had *such* a letter from some sailormen in the North Sea 'cusin' me of all sorts of awful things—forgetting 'em, and bein' fickle, and not having a big 'nuff heart, and, most of all, never, never, never, *never* "mentioning" those bad, wicked old heart-breakers, the men of the King's Navee.

Pore darlings! *Didn't* we, then? And *did* their absence make our hearts grow fonder—fonder of the —er—other men? They ask, "How would *you* feel, Eve, if you hadn't seen a man for five months —and a bit?" And lor', yes, how indeed? Really, don't know what I *should* do, do you? Cry my eyes out, kick, scream, stamp, take the veil, hate hats, lose my appetite, smack Tou-Tou, and *pour finir* drown myself, I think—if poss in that horrid old North Sea, so that those nice men who "week after week await my letters, hopefully anticipating that there'll be something about us in them," could save me.

Seems they "never cease to think of me." Or, at least, that's what they *say*, and sailors never lie, dear things, do they?

And course I'd do just 's much for them if I weren't so busy, and there weren't so many of them, *and* Tou-Tou as well.

Now the days are gettin' longer and we're getting used-er to things I'm almost afraid sometimes, you know, that my knitting won't be done for this war—not if they finish it by June, as some people say, anyway. But it 'll come in useful for something,

I'm sure. A hammock, p'r'aps—the naval scarves are 'parently meant to wind round giants. And it certainly rather looks like one—where the holes are, you know. You see, Tou-Tou's had *such* games with it.

By the way, rather a blow, wasn't it, those beastly German submarines in the Irish Channel? Been in the habit of looking on that partic'lar bit of the bounding blue as so very much our very own special preserve, hadn't we? And what everyone's asking now, of course, is, where do they keep their oil bases? But *I* shouldn't be surprised, you know, if they didn't bring it along with them. The Germ's such a careful soul. He may forget his bath, but never, never his food.

Yours Yeo-ho-ily,
EVE.

March 1st, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

In your garden I know the daffodils and scillas and primroses are coming up, for even here in London there are crocuses in the grass, and catkins on the trees, and a lovely feeling that there's something nice round the corner, which means that spring is nearly here, doesn't it? And this dreadful winter of our discontent nearly at an end—at last.

And now, without being 'sidered too dreff'ly callous and frivolous, we may now p'r'aps turn our thoughts to frocks and things. Anyway, can't go about *much* longer, can we, lookin' like teddy bears feelin' the cold; and they're so awful short and

fluffsome, are the new skirts, there'll be a positive welcoming of the wind of March that, in the words of Poet William Watson,

> Comes roaring, maned, with rampant paws,
> And bleatingly withdraws.

But I mustn't talk dress. As Mr. Churchill says, we are at war. And quite apart from clothes, I'm simply fearf'ly busy—writing letters (getting quite a lit'ry person I am these days—comes of all the men being on the sea or in the trenches 'stead of on the 'phone, I s'pose), knittin' as 'foresaid, skating at Prince's, nursin' soldiers' wives and their, oh! such badly mannered babies, and exercisin' Tou-Tou, who's a bit above himself just now, by the way. Got a first at the show last week, and now drinks his tea out of his very own first prize silver pot.

Takin' "woundeds" out in the car's another war job for women now—poor darlings, they *are* nervy, some of them, 'specially some of the sailor-men ones, who don't like the sixty miles an hour motion. And you'd never *b'lieve* what millions of *matinées* and meetings and things there are, all for war charities, of course. Last, not least, there's war shopping. Really ought to be getting quite fat boys now, oughtn't they, those men in the trenches we send half Fortnum and Mason's out to every other week or so?

Thought it wouldn't be long before Father Bernard Vaughan got chatty on the night-club touch. Not quite sure, tho', that he's *quite* right about all the young men who fall in the trenches

going straight to heaven and all the night-club ones makin' a bee-line for the other place, what? Trouble is, the young men in the trenches *are* the young men in the night clubs—when they're at home.

I don't often 'joy myself behind the *grille* at Westminster—it does give you such a *harem* feeling. But it was *quite* amusin' the delicious calm with which those two prime spenders of our pounds and pennies—Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George—positively chucked the Naval Estimates at us last week. The First Lord was beaming, buoyant, bull-doggy and bumpier-browed than ever (sign of brains, you know). The Navy's "as sound as a bell" so why worry over little things like money's obviously his idea. And as to the little Welsh Chancellor, you'd think he'd been born a Crœsus. Chatted of £2,000,000,000, he did, as you and me might of tuppence. . . . And no one breaved a word! It's a wonderful war, isn't it?

Your ever wondering
EVE.

March 15th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

Quite right to bury my pearls—I mean, bank 'em—wasn't it? Tho' certainly the last Zep *did* only hit the baby's pram! Still, you never can tell, and I hear all the other priceless things are being stored away—the Elgin marbles, the Great Auk and the Crown Jewels and Mrs. Pankhurst and things; and I'm *seriously* thinkin' of boarding

out darling Tou-Tou in some deep dungeon somewhere.

Only it 'd be so awful, wouldn't it, if I went and lost the key ? Just as well, tho', to have him safely put away, 'cos he'll bite the Germs sure as sure when they *do* come—and then be shot or something as a *franc-tireur*. The dear thing's *so* clever. Actually smelled out a Germ waiter—alleged Swiss, of course—and bit him awful vicious at lunch yesterday. He *was* cross—the Germ, I mean.

But, really, so's *everyone* been—what with those horrible Labour bothers in the North and this blockade business *and* the North-east winds. Put a stopper on even the good work in the Dardanelles, I b'lieve, and depressed us all so dreffful that we really began to take seriously *all* the rumours, and to wonder how on earth it was *ever* going to get paid—that two million a day this awful old war's soon going to cost us. It was simply wretched at Derby last week, everyone says, and, 'part from the *very* keenest, most people think about racing just now rather as the French people. They "can't understand" Epsom and Ascot, or indeed how we can go on racing at all.

And the times trooly are *terrible* crucial. All leave's been stopped, and the hour's very near now, I suppose, for that "Great Advance" we've been promised so often. All the men at the Front seem perfectly confident that the war 'll be over and the enemy beaten in less than six months from now. *How* it's going to be done they don't say, but the whole Army, from highest to lowest, 'pears positive

that the enemy's strength is undermined, and that after one big battle—or p'r'aps two—or three—the crust 'll give way and there'll be a general collapse.

By the way, far from crushin' 'em, the warning 'gainst gossips and gossipers in *The Times* last week seems merely to have stimulated the chatterers. I do 'sure you, my Betty, you'd have thought we'd never *dreamt* of spies in this our foolish England if you'd heard 'em discussing over every lunch and tea table last week the most hush-hush secrets 'bout getting up the Dardanelles and sweeping up the German submarines.

Tou-Tou sends love and hopes this 'll find you in the pink, as it leaves both him and your

EVE.

March 23rd, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

Yes, they've really closed the night clubs to officers in uniform—give 'em a chance to wear out their mufti, won't it? And what'll the P.M. do then, poor thing?

Make 'em wear their identification discs, d'you think? Or post at Murray's and places a 'tec who spots British officers at sight, in or out of khaki, and's authorised by the W.O. to send home to bed *quite* by ten any wild reveller due to drill early next morning?

Which wouldn't be such a bad idea, you know. Never saw nothing quite so goo-goo-eyed in *all* my life as some of the khakied night-club brigade on some of their mornings-after-the-night-before lately.

And h.s. isn't the word for the rumours 'bout blackmail and gambling, etc., etc., clingin' thick as autumn leaves round even the respectablest night club's reputation. But, of course, khaki's efforts to acquit itself with *éclat* at the One-step and the Hesitation do make the poor dears rather dreffully tired, and even the best "lemonade" is n.b.g. of course as a bracer or a pick-me-up. And then *they* can't stop in bed and rest all next day, like their lovely partners, can they?

Nuffin' said, by the way, 'bout Naval officers and night clubs. S'pose it's taken for granted that of course they're always home and tucked into their little bunks by ten, I *don't* think! But mustn't this night-club boom be a *godsend* to the musical comedy crowd now that supper at the restaurants is getting such a back-number? They simply swarm at 'em, in the minimum of clothing; and at the very newest—Ciro's—they've actually put musical comedy *men* on the committee, whose duty 'll be, I suppose, to sprinkle discreetly with attractive, alluring footlight stars the too utterly *dinky* dancing-floor they've got there.

'Propos, no signs of no war on at the Barrie-Gaby first-night at the Duke of York's! Stalls a fiver apiece; "Society" in rows; Lady Diana Manners, with family, in the stage box behind a feather fan; and Gabs really rather wonderful, like her pearls. Oh! those pearls! Do hope we're goin' to have a nice warm summer, by the way, if Gaby is settin' this year's fashions.

A wisp of tulle and a diamond chain's positively

all there is to the top end of a blue-and-rose creation worn on a "Wild Night at the Supper Club of the Receding Chins." And there's hardly even that to her rose-petal dancing frock, where what there is *all* stops short about halfway up her slender chest! But Gaby always makes up in boots and head-dress for any shortage elsewhere, of course.

Such lovely mornings we've been havin' even here in sooty, smutty London. Warm enuff for me and Tou-Tou to sit on the chairs in the Park and watch the riders in the Row and hear them buglin' at Knightsbridge—which Tou-Tou doesn't like a little bit. S'pose they didn't have 'em in Peking, what?

'Musin' to see some of the new soldier-men riding. One handsome Highlander last Sunday—well, you could see the Serpentine and the ducks and the boats and the trees and *everything* between him and his saddle as he cantered with ribbons flying. But others have a we've-been-glued appearance, and seem only intent on not coming unstuck. And on foot we met a Territorial Captain (with wife) pushin' a pram. Think of it, Betty! A *pram!* War *does* change things, doesn't it?

Your 'stonished
EVE.

April 1st, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

There's to be an Academy as usual, and the Jockey Club's meeting this week to decide for or against holding the Derby and Ascot—Lord Derby

and Lord Rosebery are amongst the keenest of racing-as-usual-ites, you know.

But it's amused people very much to get from semi-Royal quarters such a snortin' criticism of these functions (even in peace-time) as Colonel Knollys's—who's Queen Maud of Norway's Controller, I believe. To go to a show like "Royal" Ascot at a time like this, *he* says, when thousands of our men are enduring every description of pain, peril and privation, is like attending a garden-party in the afternoon when you've been at your wife's funeral in the morning.

'Nuff to make King Edward positively turn in his grave to hear the Knollys verdict on these his favourite functions. The Derby is just "turmoil, vivacious betting, and rampant rowdyism." And at Ascot we are "not amused" by the spectacle of "the upper classes peacocking in their plumes and prattling their puerilities, eating plentifully and drinking still more so, semi-intoxicated with the splendour and spangle of the gaudy scene. . . ."

Well, well . . . and with H.M.'s Friar Marcus *the* Epsom fav'rite too! But, in any case, not much racing for Royals this summer, one imagines—even if they do adopt Sir Maurice Fitzgerald's delightfully optimistic suggestion. Which is to postpone all the big races until September "on the off-chance of the war being ended."

They're saying that Kitchener—who's joined the Athenæum and's putting on flesh—and Joffre and everybody at H.Q. are rather bucked 'bout the Germs *not* takin' the offensive any more. Take it

for a sign—and a good one! But our losses are *rather* awful, and more and more men are going out to fill the gaps. We've smartened khaki up no end, by the way; the bronze badges and things are *very* fascinating, and it's wonderful what a good batman can do with lots of nice brown leather.

Begin to think khaki colour suits the beautiful bronzed English skins better even than the old red and blue and gold. Anyway, they all look perfect dears—but don't tell the men in navy blue I said so, will you?

Talkin' of the fighting men, Tou-Tou's gettin' bloodthirstier every day. Embarked last week on a reg'lar *campaign* of frightfulness, and gnaws my nicest *pantoufles* to death at the rate of one a night. Shows the *fearful* force of bad example, doesn't it?

Yours frightfully,
EVE.

April 15th, 1915.

BELOVED BETTY,

Reg'lar rural Easter I've been having—you know, daffodils and primroses, and the trees buddin' away like mad, and the birds *so* busy—woke me up every morning, the little fiends. And five meals a day, and not war-time ones either, and lots of golf and a little chem—I mean auction—after dinner, and my new full skirts a *t'rific* sensation. Sight for sore eyes, a sailor-man said it was, after keepin' a lookout for those horrid old Germ submarines all through the snowy, sleety winter.

Talkin' of clothes—what *would* men do without us, even in war-time? Columns and columns and columns of *The Times* are now devoted to—what d'you think? Why, nothin' more nor less than the new fashions, which have so 'tirely changed the female "line" that nothing anyone ever possessed before is now any use whatever! The new outline's so very, very new that it 'll be as clear as daylight even to the *least* sophisticated who's wearin' this year's clothes and who last's.

There's a reg'lar battle goin' on about it, and one "husband" 's even written to the papers. Says it's just "a wicked conspiracy to force women to embark at this time of all times into the most sweeping and costly revolutions in fashions that we've seen for years and years."

Not that it matters, of course, what anyone *says* about fashions—you've just got to follow 'em, whether you want to or not. And as for *men* talkin' about the women of England "deserving the contempt of their country" if we let ourselves be victimised this way—who, may I ask, do women dress for? Why, men, of course. For aren't they always the *very* first to find out whether what you're wearin' for their edification is the last word or only the one before the last? 'Nother thing—who, I ask you, are more *slavish* followers of fash than men? Supposin', f'rinstance, the tailors decreed trousers "off" and kilts or knee-breeches "it." Who'd wear mere trews?

Yours defiantly,

EVE.

May 10th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

We're all wonderin' here who'll be the super-loyal ones to follow H.M.'s good example and give up drink for the duration. Up to now there hasn't been a *rush* eggzacly, tho' drinks are "off" too, I b'lieve, at York House. Must be cheerfuller than ever, what, K.'s bachelor dinners, tho' even *aqua pura* I s'pose 'd almost taste like *something* out of those gorgeous "collected" glasses of his.

Reminds me, time of their lives for the collecting crowd, the Red Cross sale at Christie's. Great feature of the show 's Sargent's portrait of the highest bidder for his canvas—a 'menjous honour, 'cos he chucked painting people *ages* ago, being fed to the eyebrows with that partic'lar form of "art." And his example's been followed by the great Augustus John, the "primitive women" painter, and Orpen and Lavery and the Austrian de Laszlo, whose "Mrs. Elinor Glyn" is the splash picture of the Portrait Show at the Grosvenor.

Well, we'll anyway be gettin' something for our money, shan't we? Which isn't always what happens when you're on the charity show touch. And the cause, of course, is the very best—our poor wounded men, of whom they say there'll be at least a couple of hundred thousand when that "Irresistible Offensive" begins.

Gov'ment's in hot water again—all 'bout munitions this time. If all one hears is only *half* true, that's why they're holding up the New Army. The

men are all on the *qui vive* and waiting from day to day for their marching orders. But armies are no good *sans* arms, I suppose, and the story is that even "out there" they're badly baulked for want of those "more and more munitions" Sir John French keeps asking for.

"The more ammunition the less danger to our men," French says, and it's just too dreadful to think that here at home we're not sending out to them the one thing they're most wanting. If only one could do something really real to help. Heaps of women, anyway, *are* doing heaps of things they've never done before, and making munitions isn't such fearf'ly "unwomanly" work. And when conscription comes they'll jolly well have to do a lot more, I s'pose.

Yours, trying on trousers,
EVE.

May 20th, 1915.

MY DEAR BETTY,

There's a lot of talk 'bout the many "little things" they say the soldier-men have left behind 'em. Bit of a problem, isn't it? But on the whole, taking it by and large, why worry? After all, it's men that matter, isn't it? And as an optimist, p'r'aps more patriotic than virtuous, has put it, "A few extra little Kitches and Terriers won't hurt anyone. Britain 'll want 'em *all!*"

Alas! Yes, it *does* look as if we will, doesn't it? We stand on the edge of great events, it seems, tho' as far as the war goes we also stand, 'cording

to the experts, just 'zacly only where we were last September. (Yes, I know the P.M. keeps saying that all's quite all right in the rightest of possible worlds, and that there's no lack of anything—shells, men, supplies, everything—anywhere. But he does wear, doesn't he, such *very* rose-coloured spectacles ?)

This is a stationary sort of a conflict, 'parently—on the land, anyway. On the sea—well, the men in navy blue *have* swept the loathly Germ off *that*, haven't they ? And it's not their fault, poor darlings, that the German Grand Fleet, skulking at Kiel, is stronger now than when the war began. Come to that, so's ours, of course.

But oh ! isn't it horrid and hateful ? I *do* wish the war *would* stop—as the optimists keep declaring—in June, isn't it, or July at the latest ? French people tell me that over here we don't know what war is, and I s'pose it's true, in a way. But all the same there's a nasty war-time flavour creepin' into nearly everything. All the shows, such as they are, concerts, teas, dances, *matinées*, are for charities, and if some of 'em don't bring it home even to the densest that there's an awful, *awful* war on—well, then nothing will. That one, f'rinstance, for the blinded fighting men at St. Dunstan's. Oh, Betty, it was *so* tragic and pathetic, and yet so wonderful. To give one's eyes for one's country, never to see the dear, beautiful world again. . . . It's a greater gift almost than one's life, I think.

Even for the rest of us, how to be happy if there is a war—that is the question. It's all so obsessing,

what with the Dardanelles and the last new fight for Calais and the rest of it. All the same, we "carry on" somehow, tho' the world *is* turned topsy-turvy and half our men are gone. And succeed really quite 'stonishingly sometimes, I don't mind telling you. "*Is* there a war?" one man said to me at the last musical-comedy *première*. And I 'fessed "No, there can't be!" as I marked the frocks off and on the stage, and listened to the newest war-time tunes.

Talkin' of frocks, *what* terrors some of the women do look with their hair done the new Delysia *bald* way. Never saw such *miles* of foreheads in all me life! 'Minded me of the dear old story of the Bishop and the *très décolletée* lady. "Ever seen anything like it?" asked a friend. "Well—er—not since I was a baby," said the Bishop.

Yours, still carrying on,
EVE.

May 30th, 1915.

MY DEAR BETTY,

S'pose we never *shall* be able to play the loathsome Germ at his own most loathly game? Question of tradition and all that, perhaps, or 'cos we're civilised and the Germ's not. But one thing's certain, not the lowest-down, not the *worst* of Englishmen could ever, *ever* do a tithe of the awful, *wicked* things the Hun does. The *Lusitania* outrage put the lid on it.

And put our blood up! Shouldn't really wonder. Betty, if we begin now to be p'r'aps not *quite* so

kind and punctilious and chivalrous to the enemy both at home and abroad. For a start, really gave the "specials" some real war-work at last when people started breakin' up our aliens' happy homes last week.

Seem to have come to a tightish corner, don't we? Zeps at home, and the fighting in Flanders and at the Dardanelles so terrible that even the most undaunted everything-as-usual-ers have at last decided that p'r'aps after all some of our amusements 'll have to go if they interfere with the war. Still, there was quite a crowd for the Jubilee, and at Newmarket, for the Second Spring, the circs were, as the papers say, "ideal"—if you could forget, that is, the day before's *Lusitania* horror.

And people are still rattlin' on 'bout August for the end of the war—you don't think they mean August next year, do you?

They say they're going to slacken off the Dardanelles business soon if we don't get any forrader. Half the world's busy criticisin' the First Lord 'cos the venture's proved not such an easy nut to crack after all. And the other half's got their eye on Sir Ian Hamilton, the man that's running the job. He's one of our "interesting" Generals, you know. Handsome, and a charmin' personality and a bit of a poet, and likes entertainin' cultured people—which isn't a failing most cavalrymen 'd care to own to, is it?

Great discussions, too, all about conscription. Lord Derby—who spent his Whitsuntide whippin'

up recruits on the sands at Blackpool—says it's a cert. And as he gets his tips straight from K. himself, s'pose he *knows*. But I'm not sure Lord Winterton hasn't struck the best idea—that *every* man between eighteen and forty-five should do war-work of some kind. Fighting if he's young and strong enough, munitioning and things if he isn't. 'Fraid it's a *much* too sensible suggestion for this Gov'ment to work on.

Yours sceptically,
EVE.

June 10th, 1915.

BETTY DEAR!

What price, eh, our new Coalition Government? Be amusin', won't it, watchin' it coalesce? I do wonder how they'll do it. Will they coo like sucking doves, d'you think? Or purr like a phalanx of pussy cats? Or simply fight like ord'nary common or garden Gov'ments? And how 'll they sit in the House? And will they really, *really* run this horrid old war *really* properly?

Anyway, they can't, not many of 'em, plead youth and inexperience, can they? Most of 'em have been playin' the political game for *centuries*, and if age brings wisdom—but it doesn't often, does it? Not to men, anyway.

Fearful weepin's and wailin's goin' up to Heaven from the big dressmaking places 'bout the way people aren't buying things. No Derby, no Ascot, no Sandown, and no Goodwood—simply wiped out profits, they say, for even the most expensive black

doesn't somehow mount up on the bill quite like the two-frocks-a-day orders we used to give 'em for the big meetings. Considering all things, tho , the people who dress us haven't done so badly if it is a war year.

Week-ended in the Zep-zone, Tou-Tou and me. There was a top-hole, slap-up display for the occasion, and *what* d'you think we went and did: *both* of us ? Slept through it, my dear. Actually went on dreamin' clean through the whole affair, tho' they said the din was something fearful.

I *was* disappointed. Nearly wept next morning, I did. Such a *dink* of a *sauter du lit* I'd got ready ! And the sweetest thing in respirators. They're fixing 'em up now so's they give you a sort of a Turkish harem appearance. You know, all sparklin' eyes and the powder on your nose. The rest—myst'ry ! *Very* altogether.

Got back to London right in the plumb middle of our first heat-wave. And blew right away into quite a collection of small shows, all the quietest, war-time kind that do their " bit " taking our minds just a little off what we're beginning now to try not to think about—the war and all the horrid things war means: tears and anxiety, and oh ! such heartbreaking sadness.

But Murray's and places are goin' stronger than ever, if there is a war. People dance the daylight in on nothing pungenter than a " stone ginger," and they're even opening a sort of a side-show down at Maidenhead in a nice old house opposite Skindle's, on the other side of the river. Of course

—well, yes, perhaps night clubs on the river do seem a little gilding the lily and that sort of thing. But, of course, Maidenhead's really more of an annexe to Piccadilly now, isn't it? Only *worse*, some people think.

Must conclude, as Tou-Tou and me we aren't feeling quite our own bright and breezy selves. A nice man sent along a lovely basket of the most 'normous strawberries. And what with them *and* the cream . . .

Yours full-up,
EVE.

June 24th, 1915.

MY DEAR BETTY,

The rush of our warriors to doff their war-stained khaki and revert to the nice clean joys of black and white is apt to lead the unwary into pit-falls. With three bold, brave on-leavers who'd been "out there" since August we blew in after a *revue* to somewhere in the Strand last night.

The place was chock bang full *as* usual—Temporary Second Lieutenants (new Army) in rows, and their (also somewhat tempy) ladies in millions. Haughty looks at our muftied men from everyone of the Temp. Sec. Lieuts., and from their ladies—'stead of the usual veiled nods, winks, blinks, and wreathèd smiles—sniffs, sneers, glances *frappées*.

We made a 'mediate book on which of our too-fearf'ly-in-the-pink trio would get a white feather first. The V.C. did—he's also got the D.S.O.! So they made him pay for the supper.

Simply doesn't seem poss, does it, that it's mid-summer again ? And Lord ! can it be very nearly a whole long year since the prehistoric days when there wasn't a war, and life was one long round of all the things we now don't do at all ? True, we make nefforts—to pull ourselves together and dine and dance and dally. But nearly always it gets into the papers, and then serious people like Lord St. Davids go and hold us up to public scornery in Parliament as reckless, vitiated, blighted "society" women who fiddle while Rome burns.

So there's really only one sort of entertainment that's proper and permitted, and that's the Charity Show that's " for " something. 'Tween whiles, we even only use the Park for exercisin' the dogs and gettin' fresh air—it's a positive tragedy. Such miles and millions of empty green chairs all up Park Lane way simply asking to be sat on of a fine evening. Even the old crawling around in cars and carriages isn't done much now, either. Such lots of the cars are booked all day driving " woundeds " round the town, where it still *looks* gay with tons of khaki and muslin frocks and blue and gold around, and sprinkles of gaudy Staff officers covered with red bits.

But underneath even the gold and green and pink and blue I'm afraid there's rather a *grey* feeling. All those marching men, whistling

The sunshine of your smile—

how many will come back to us, and which are those that are doomed ? And then I'm afraid our

new Coalitioners aren't coalescing quite so prettily as we hoped they would when they all came in with such a flourish of trumpets. Actually last week there was even talk of the whole show going smash again. Truth is, it's not dead even yet, all the weary old party business. And won't be till we clear the field of—well, I s'pose . . . politicians.

On the principle that however they did it they couldn't do much *worse*, someone's been asking, why not let the soldiers and sailors run the war job for a time ? And quite a spry young thing in ideas is that we should put the business out by tender to the big firms and people. But we're all agreed that the whole show's 'parently got too big for the politicians. They're always worryin' about silly old things like procedure or precedence or some nonsense, and simply don't seem to be able to go blind at the contract in hand. Pity they don't get a few women in to help, I think. Then we'd start, anyway.

Yours impatiently,
EVE.

July 10th, 1915.

MY DEAR BETTY,

Positively very nearly petered out, we did, last week, *so* done up we were after all the *streams* of charity mats and things, *and* our simply superhuman efforts on Alexandra Day. Naturally, I smiled more for a *whole* sovereign than a half one—smiles on an ascending scale, in fact. But we just *live* for charity of course these days, and I really

very nearly did the Duchess of Devonshire touch and *kissed* a perfectly darling man I didn't know from Adam (tho' he said he was sure he'd seen me somewhere before), who pressed a fiver into my hand and said, No, he didn't want a rose, thank you, but didn't I want some tea ?

Reminds me, at lunch—it's *the* tip, you know, to do your rose-selling's as near as you positively can to the Carlton or somewhere—we jest simply *had* to break our war-time—er—rules, and drink a real drink to the Prince of Wales's twenty-firster. At tea I felt so full of meself makin' so much money that I put down two iced coffees and—well, it's 'stonishin' what an appetite standing about on pavements does give you, and you know how fear-f'ly temptin' the Rumpelmayer cakes are.

Dined in bed off a cutlet and a hair-of-the-dog-that-bit-me-at-lunch, bein' dead to the world from fearful fatigue. But got up afterwards, 'cos they suddenly evolved one of those new Zep-parties on the roof next door, and wanted me to come and bring Tou-Tou, so's he could bark at any beastly Germ that might blow in. But, alas, nothing happened.

One of my war discoveries is that men take quite as long (and some of 'em longer) shopping as we women do. Been helpin' some bright young things in khaki with *very* new commissions to buy all the hundred and one things they want—and the other hundred and one the shop people say they absolutely must have. Here's a rough time-table:

Boots	3 hours.
Gum boots	2 ,,
Soft Service cap	1 ,,
Socks (various)	¾ ,,
Ties	½ ,,
Cane	¼ ,,
Switch	1 ,,

As for the prices—oh, to be an Army tailor now that war is here! *Or* a dressmaker! The last word in frocks gets more and more expensive every day. Such a pity one can't *wait* to buy the right clothes. But that's just the whole point, isn't it? Buy them and wear them the instant moment they're born and you're "it" if you *are* ruined. Wait and—well, the chances are then *you'll* be left waiting too.

The good old saying, "No news is good news," doesn't seem to be quite workin' out these times, does it? And the hospitals are getting so full that they're talking of putting up tempy ones in the big squares. It 'll mean lopping some of the old trees, of course, and it 'd be farewell to the grass and also to the peace and quiet we pay such *'normous* rents for. But what does that matter? What does *anything* matter so long as our men get everything and anything that's *any* return for all they've done for us?

Haven't quite made up my mind whether to go harvesting this week—3d. an hour. War-work, you know. Taking a man's place, and that sort of thing. But there's a fearful lot else to do, and, anyway, Tou-Tou's liable to hay-fever and the weather's

broken a bit, so p'r'aps I'd better stay at home and "organise."

Yours charitably,
EVE.

July 30th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

People are fearf'ly intrigued about what the Gov'ment's going to do with all these lists they're makin' for the National Register. They say it 'll take at least two months to make up. Which brings us to October or thereabouts. So that if we're all sorted out to do our little jobs by, say, July next year, s'pose it 'll be quickish work. If it's taken the poor old things nearly a year to organise what's even more important—munitions—it's not very likely they'll want much less to fix up all the masses of unskilled labour.

Meanwhile, 'stead of spend-as-usual, buy-more-than-usual, do-everything-as-usual, we're now being implored and ordered and cajoled and begged and prayed to economise. Buy War Loan, of course—s'pose 4½ per cent.'s not to be sneezed at these uncertain times—but for the rest just keep on 'conomising. Soon, they say, we'll jolly well *have* to, so best take the bull by the horns and make no bones about it.

P'r'aps it 'll really become the fashion. Then, of course, we shall all do it. And even now quite a lot of women are writing to the papers saying how nice thrift is, really, and how we ought to do what our grandmothers did and "turn" our frocks, and how

you soon get really quite keen on margarine instead of butter, and how it's *quite easy* for a patriot to dismiss the servants and do the work yourself.

I *don't* think. Still, we're thinkin' hard how we can—'conomise, I mean—tho' someone *did* pay 2,000 guineas last week for a pair of 1760 vases at Christie's, and everyone seemed to be laying in simply *miles* of expensive undies and things at all the sales. Only one man on your car's also the thing now—we did get so bored with the piercing optics of recruitin' sergeants. Who all seem to have a special down on footmen—s'pose 'cos of their figures and things. And tho' the nothing-to-drink-and-hardly-anything-to-eat fad's fizzled out a bit, we're going slow that way, too. Caviare and cocktails on birfdays only now, and Tou-Tou and me haven't had cream in our coffee not for weeks and weeks and weeks.

'Course the amusin' part of it is that the people who are calling upon us to be thrifty are nearly all the ones who are pouring out someone else's money like mad. "I shall want about a million more billions," Chancellors and people say calmly, and then get into 90 h.p. cars and sprint away to Walton Heath and places for an expensive game of golf—they say, you know, it's always the Radicals who overtip the caddies and things. And when they come back, "You've got to live more simply," they tell us. "Save! Hoard! Economise! Keep your potato peelings like the Germans do!" It *is* a funny world, isn't it?

The only thing we mustn't, of course, be stingy

about is charity. The more you pay for your stall at Lady Blank's "in aid of," the more merit you acquire. And I can't say I've noticed any *wild* economy in the hats and things we're wearin' at these shows. Talk about *bushes* of aigrettes. And no one's yet popped her pearls to buy War Loan, either, judgin' by the rows and rows of priceless beads we're still hung around with.

In our spare moments we've all of course been digestin' the last scream in sculptors—the Serbian Meshtrovitch man at the Victoria and Albert. He's having quite a *furore*. Shocks the supersensitive something awful, and one cross critic says he's inchoate, wilful, amorphous, monstrous and immoral. Did you *ever?* Also that the poor dear Vic. and Alb. is encouragin' "the most morbid and pernicious artistic tendencies of our day" by extending to such naughty things the hospitality of walls hitherto positively Victorianly pure.

Glad to say cold water's been thrown on the suggestion that all the vicars of all the churches should rush around and get all the sextons to ring all the bells when the Zeps come. They did it at Calais, and what with people screamin' and dogs barkin'—well, the Hun must have known he was over *something*, anyway.

Must stop now—it's dinner-time. Tou-Tou's. I have to give it to him very punctual now, 'cos I've cut him down to five meals a day, war rations —or there's trouble. As it is, he's started a Hunnish trick of bitin' my heels awful vicious to hurry me up when I'm dressin'. Keep telling him the money

that used to pay for the cutlets is now doin' its bit in War Loan. But he only barks "*Gott strafe* Mr. McKenna!" He *is* so clever, poor darling.

Fondest love from both of us. Your

EVE.

August 18*th*, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

You may think I'm just

> . . . a butterfly born in a bower
> Where the roses and lilies and violets meet.

But I don't mind tellin' *you* that it's been *very* hard work forcin' people positively at the point of the bayonet to buy tickets for charity mats and things they don't want, at prices that turn 'em fairly green, to see people they're tired of, recitin' pieces or singin' songs they never liked anyway.

We're all very, very tired. I really don't b'lieve we should get so *very* excited if we heard that the Huns had arrived at Calais and were trainin' those big guns they've talked so much about on Dover. A few months ago the loss of Warsaw would have made us get up and scream for someone to do something. As it was, a few more people went off to Scotland for the twelfth—which hasn't got a capital T any more—and the few gay places left that still *are* gay "carried on." But if Russia keeps on retreating, s'pose the Germ 'll naturally push harder than ever this side.

You know, they say that the people who really know what's going to happen—or, anyway, who know what *does*—are quite resigned to a few rather

nasty knocks before . . . well, before *we* do the knocking. But it's very wearing, isn't it ? And things aren't made cheerfuller this second war August by perfectly awful rumours 'bout the 'pallin' taxes they're plottin'—five shillings in the pound on incomes, and all the luxury things taxed up to the absolute limit.

And not only luxuries—petrol's one of the many things there's talk of there being a shortage of. They say the lynx-eye of whoever's dealin' with these matters is fixin' itself on the cars *de luxe* (of which there really seem to be as many about as ever !) and on the joy-rides of those *lads* the Naval Airmen and R.N.V.R. heroes, who dash about in perfectly 'normous cars in a thunder of open exhausts, 'companied always by something very sorcy in the way of one of these ornamental little ladies whose boots, side-curls and marvellous short skirts do provide such bright spots in war-time at the Savoy and the Piccadilly and the Brighton Metropole and places.

London's *'strawdin'ry* full for August—it's more than ever the hub of the world now, of course. But "from information received" Scotland isn't empty either. The birds have got to be brought down somehow, I suppose. And there's nothing like big spaces and heathered hills and dear soft valley places and bubbly, brawling, bending streams, is there, for helping to heal hurt hearts ? I forget who said, London's impossible for the stricken soul—London the amusing, the beloved, the dear old village where so many of our dear men have had the "good times"

they won't ever have again. But now, "every place *reminds* one," as a girl whose man's "gone west," said last week. "The restaurants where we had such topping dinners, the Park where we used to ride and talk, the theatres, Piccadilly where his club was, Bond Street where we bought things . . ." Oh, Betty, Betty, what *horrid* times! Sometimes I don't think I can bear it *any* longer.

Yours, nearly done in,
EVE.

September 30th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

Quite meant to keep a record for you of all the committees 'pon which are sitting all the busy, busy ladies, so's to find out who was the champion committee-ist. But good resolutions do get so obscured always, don't they? The catchword now, you know, is organisation. Only the trouble's to find the people who want to be organised. What they all want to do is the *organising*.

Meanwhile, no one's talked anything else but Budget, Budget, Budget, for days and days. It's even pushed out conscription or national service or whatever they're going to call it when it does come. And oh, my dear, the *lectures* in the papers 'bout how to 'conomise so's we can save enough to pay the horrid old war taxes!

'Course, no one takes much notice. I mean . . . well, as someone's said, economy's really only a way of spendin' money without getting any fun out of it, and there's simply nothing like it for runnin'

up the most appallin' bills. F'rinstance, so's I shan't *ever* spend *anything* Tou-Tou and me always go out without any money hardly nowadays—and what's my reward? You can hardly see my mornin' tea-tray for the bills!

Your Eve always feels same way as whoever it was said "Give me the luxuries of life, and I'll do without the necessaries." Think we must be rather alike, me and the rather sweet sailor-man who rolled in here last week positively full to the brim with the salt-sea breezes—and the salt sea's boredom too, poor dear. He's got a topping voice, and he said how awf'ly he missed singing when they're out at sea for long. "But you've got your pianos and things on board again now," I said, "haven't you? Can't any of 'em play your accompaniments?" "Oh yes," he said. "but it's not the same thing. You see, I simply *must* have an accompanist I can *hug!*" Voluptuous creatures, men, aren't they? By the way, of course we're going to the Beecham Opera Season *première* this week. Music's *such* a help, isn't it? Makes you forget all the horrid things quicker than anything, and it doesn't seem so awf'ly incongruous, somehow, music and the war. Can't say the same of some of the *revues* and musical comedies and things the fighting men will insist on being taken to. But for them it's different, of course, and even 'part from the war it's no good 'spectin' legs, 'cetera, to appeal to us same as them, is it?

Your superior
EVE.

October 15*th*, 1915.

DEAR BETTY,

We've started "Days" again—Serbian, Italian and what-not—and the old charity mats 'll be anyway a chance to show the new autumn frocks and things that some of us—er, well, of course, one's got to be *clothed*, anyway, hasn't one? *Did* you see how some *absurd* man's written to the papers saying that so's to curb the wicked extravagance of women in war-time Gov'ment ought to tax all frocks and hats that cost more than £5?

As if there *were* any clothes that didn't cost £5! Sometimes, you know, darling, I *reely* can't help thinking that even Tou-Tou's got more sense than some of these silly men. At *least* the darling thing knows what a *fearful* lot of clothes we've simply got to have, 'cos of course I always take the precious with me to all the dress places. *Quite* at home, he is. Sits down on his little rear and takes the most 'telligent interest. And knows as well as I do that even Eve can't go about in nuffin'—not when there's such *frabjous* frocks about, anyway!

The October meetings at Newmarket are always so topping I *almost* ran up last week to back on the spot my fancy for the Ten Thousand. But in the end I didn't, after all. All the week the stories of the new advance in Flanders kept coming along, in the papers and out of them, and every day we waited —oh! so anxiously! Victory's a drefful costly business, isn't it? And somehow suddenly even your Eve lost heart for all the things we used to do,

when she remembered all the dear, dear men we'll never see again who used to make our bets for us and watch with us as the lovely gees raced down the Rowley Mile.

Not that we're downhearted, really. The Flanders show truly does seem progressing, and if we haven't got the hateful Hun *quite* on the run, not yet, everyone says we've anyway put the fear of—Tommy Atkins—into him. Which is something, isn't it? By the way, it's whispered that some of those very bright spirits who plunged with such terrifying ardour into hospital nursin' and sittin' on committees and lookin' after soldiers' wives and amusin' their crumby babies are getting simply *fearf'ly* fed up with what's proving to be something horribly like real work-and-no-damn-nonsense-about-it.

It's turning out such a *long* war, you see, and they've got a big bit more than they bargained for, poor dears, lots of 'em. One 'Merican girl we know, who *flew* over to "do something" and *insisted* on something in France, has been washing up dirty plates for so long (that's the only work the 'thorities felt they could trust her with) that her small Transatlantic and once-really-quite-nice nose is now permanently shiny from the steam and stuff.

And as for the

> . . . pale hands she loved
> Beside the Shalimar . . .

well, she's gone back to get 'em prop'ly "fixed" in Noo York. Where she's havin' the time of her life from all accounts, spite of the shine aforesaid, as a new sort of thing in lions. You know—

"Straight from the Front: How an American Society Girl nursed British Wounded on the Battlefield," and all that. And *crowds* of parties. They haven't of course stopped enjoying themselves in America just 'cos poor old Yurrup's got tied up in such an awful war.

Yours *quite* Europeanly,
EVE.

October 30*th*, 1915.

BELOVED BETTY,

What with all these old Zeps *and* the Stygian blackness of the streets, we really are gettin' quite a share of our so long overdue beauty sleep these days. But we make up by day what we miss by night. Some of the restaurants at lunch-time are so bung full *and* so noisy that really you have to sit up and pinch yourself sometimes just to make sure it's really true that England's really up against *the* stiffest proposition yet, and that half the country nearly is in mourning.

'Course, the men on leave (not that there's an awful lot of them now they're so busy over there, poor dear things) like to feed where it's cheery—soft music of the emotional, squeegee-squeezeme kind, and 'spensive frocks and hats, must be a relief after six months of dug-out life. And nice things to eat, too. We don't economise when *they're* about, naturally.

But when we're by ourselves you'll be surprised to hear that there really is at last some war-rationing—just a little, anyway. I've even heard of people

riding on 'buses. But they say the conductor-men do get so fearf'ly ratty when you just say "Home" and forget about the penny. On tips, too, you can save a bit—for a time.

Then you have to begin again, of course, 'cos you can't go about for *ever* with *nobody* doing *anything* for you, can you? Too awful, you know, if on top of *everything*, we have to do our own *work*. In any case there's not too much tinsel, spangle and motley *or* splurge in life when there's a war. "The worst week of the war" someone said last week was, and really I think it was, what with those too awful casualty lists and the new trouble in the East and all.

The only nice thing that happens is weddings. Lor'! what a rush! And fearf'ly thrillin', of course, 'specially for the buds who've only just burst from their discreet *pensionnat de demoiselles* at Eastbourne or somewhere. It *is* rather poignant, you know, to 'tend you're jest frightened to death when a dear, nice, 'petuous soldier-boy, all violet hair-wash and Russia leather and de Reszkes, hugs you hard and says, "What about getting married? Shall us? Let's."

And talkin' of thrills, a touchin' spectacle the U.S. President man gettin' engaged again at sweet and sixty or thereabouts, isn't it? The lady's not one of your silly young things, either, judgin' by her distinctly *rangée* and also extensive appearance. But it's nice to hear how she's got the proper American leaning to the proprieties. She's been married quite a lot before, and I shouldn't think

the President's the bold, bad, passionate sort 'zacly, would you ? But "Momma" went with the *fiancés* to New York to buy the ring all right.

Made a bit of a howler, what, whoever said that women weren't buyin' clothes 'cos of the war ? Judgin' by appearances—and how else can you ?—not a single one of us is wearin' a single thing left over. Not even furs, which we wear round our legs and faces now. Last year it was somewhere quite diff.

Yours furrily,
EVE.

November 10th, 1915.

MY DEAR BETTY,

Heart-breaking job, I should think, this new one of Lord Derby's as recruiter-in-chief—he seems rather doubtful about it himself, and no wonder. Why they don't bring in conscription and be done with it . . . Even the slowest Ministers say it's inevitable sooner or later.

By the way, *some* strafing going on at Westminster. Everyone's catching it, or going to—Sir John Simon 'bout the Censorship, Sir Edward Grey 'bout those tiresome Balkans, Winston and the Dardanelles, Lloyd George and munitions, Lord Isaacs-Reading and the 'Merican War Loan, Mr. McKenna and the Budget, Arthur J. Balfour and the blockade, Mr. Asquith 'bout *everything.*

'Course if people go getting too obstreperous and asking too many awkward questions, the P.M. will just adjourn 'em—and no bones made about it.

For more and more, you know, our most autocratic democrat loves to quaff

the sweetest, holiest draught of power . . .

It's a vice that grows upon you, as every woman knows, like a telephone by your bed and bath salts and silk undies and things. Once had, always wanted.

But really, what with sensational resignations and more sensational appointments, and rifts and rumblings and rumours, and such a lot of chat, it's a wonder there's any time at all to get on with the poor old war. Every week some new man's appointed and others we've finished with sent home, and it's the one topic—if we do turn the Gov'ment out, who on earth to put in ?

Keepin' the Commons busy as bees, you know, tryin' to worm war items out of the Cabinet—which may be totterin' fast to its doom, as some people say, but manages to keep its "don't-tell-nuffin'-to-nobody" end up *very* healthily, I notice. Someone's been saying that it doesn't tell us anything 'cos there's nothing to tell—hasn't done anything. And of course one *doesn't* talk about one's mistakes, what ?

Getting just a *teeny* bit nervous o' nights now, some of us, you know, in the theatres and places. It's *rather* funny seeing people jump whenever anyone drops anything. A few whole-hoggers are not dressing, the idea bein' that you can take to your heels and bolt to the cellar a lot easier in a coat and skirt than in a chiffon evening frock. But the

really nervous are stopping at home, where I've been puttin' in quite a lot of reading. Rather liked the Lady Cardigan story in one of the week's Memoirs. That amusing old thing always averred that it was exceedingly tactless of a certain famous and beautiful lady not to have chosen lovers more after the type of her husband—" then the children 'd have *matched* better."

And I was quite pleased with Lord Redesdale's little tale about the American who was boasting of the new town that he anticipated would soon sprout round his solitary log-hut. " All that is wanted here, sir," he said, " is a little water and good society." " Yes," said his listener, " and the same remark applies to hell."

Yours, till h—— freezes,
EVE.

November 30th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

It's been said discretion—that *dull* virtue—is not one of Eve's any more than it's one of that angel child Winston's characteristics. But, my word! I *really* don't think, not at my most indiscreetest, not on the topmost top of my form, I've ever so positively wallowed in the indiscreet as did that brave man Lord St. Davids last week in the Lords—where one goes now, you know, if you want to hear the last word in snorting criticisms on the shortcomings of Mr. Asquith's Government.

Someone said the other day that it was a reg'lar

whispering gallery just now, this war-time world of ours. But here is no whisperer, egad! Positively shrieked from the housetops—or rather from the tank-like depths of the Lords' Chamber—he did, in the *boldest* language, all the things we've all been so fearf'ly careful only to murmur faint and low for months.

And 'bout nothing so dull either as mere contract scandals, or the waste of army rations, or even the night clubs—which Lord Curzon's running a Bill to do away with. (He says they're haunts of temptation and dens of iniquity!) No, it was the naughtiness of G.H.Q. Lord St. D. talked about. And I tell you we weren't half nervous, what, when the noble lord got on to the subject of lady visitors at Army Headquarters in France.

For one awful moment we had a fearful fear he was going to name *names*—which *would* have been a nice little bit of fat for Press and populace next morning. And there were qualms, too, when the lordly chat turned on the sort of people the G.H.Q. Staff was made up of. What *he* says is that the petticoated wire-pullers have worked off into it all the men of their families, and that *their* chief qualifications are that they play a toppin' game of auction, know how to order a dinner, and look awf'ly dinky in red tabs.

Lord Haldane, bein' a bachelor, was simply sweet about it. Said he could only say that if there really *were* females at G.H.Q., then they must have got there in face of the *greatest* difficulties put in their way and owing to the determined character-

istics of their sex. What ho! And also, as the mountain said to Mahomet, well, p'r'aps.

On the same sorcy subject—'tisn't often you see the Lords all so wide awake as they were that afternoon—even Lord Crewe was almost amusin'. Said they (the ladies) really—er—didn't ought to be there, you know, they didn't really, and that the idea of females at the Front for purely "social objects" didn't commend itself either to him or the Government, ah, er . . .

I'm busier than any old bee knittin' socks again for soldiers—oh, and sailors, of course. "Over there" they've 'parently settled down once again into the squidgy-squadgy, moist-and-muddy nastiness which is a Flanders winter. But I do hope the New Army won't have to put up with quite all the hardships the poor, dear, gallant Regular one did last winter. They were civvies who'd never heard of war such a *little* time ago, poor darlings, and can't be really properly thoroughly hardened yet.

Bad 'nuff if they have to wear some of the "comforts" patriotic woman is again preparing for 'em. Quite between you and me, Betty darling, what with the old stitches that *will* keep on dropping *and* the fearful mauling Tou-Tou gives 'em every time he feels at all uppish, the socks I knit for soldiers—and sailors!—aren't the or'nary kind at *all*. But variety's the spice of life, isn't it?

Yours, *always* doing it,

EVE.

December 15th, 1915.

DEAREST BETTY,

It won't eggzacly be a merry Christmas, will it? 'Cos really, what with this infern—I mean, eternal war, and all its complications and ramifications and what not, I don't know *who* feels like making a real, warm, wild old time of it.

Next Christmas—p'r'aps. . . . But we aren't 'cisely fixing up things even for that now, you know. The social atmosphere's a trifle blue. For one thing, there's suspish about the Downing Street end of the war. And there's always those horrid Dardanelles and the Balkan business. Those Balkans, of which someone's just said: "*C'est un pays où le bon Dieu n'a pas passé, ou au moins il a peut-être passé en aeroplane.*"

Tryin' not to forget one single one of all the B.E.F.'s all over the world has made life one wild, long lick this last week or two—I was *so* afraid just 'cos I hadn't licked stamps enuff some poor dear darling thing in khaki or navy blue should p'r'aps go thinking we'd forgotten him. So I sent greetings everywhere—to Flanders, where it's all snow and slush and rotting sandbags and landslips and wet feet and misery. To Gallipoli, where there's a winter of "severest hardships" and such storms that the other day a whole ship-load of Christmas parcels and letters went to the bottom right in sight of land. To Mesopotamia, where—oh, Betty, Betty, what our men endure keeping the outposts of Empire! And last not least to the North Sea, where life's no fun in winter either.

Even here—d'you know, Betty, I don't know whether it's 'cos it's Christmas-time coming or what, but I don't get one littlest bit 'customed to seeing our poor dear woundeds about. Nearly disgraced myself for ever, your Eve did, by all but bursting into bitter tears at one of the last week's charity mats. Half the audience were the boys in blue, and when it took ten minutes to get one poor crippled boy into his seat, and when I remembered, sudden-like, why he was now a hurt, maimed, broken cripple instead of a straight and splendid man—just for us and England—well, as I say, I there and then very nearly did a real drenchy weep, I did.

Only then the band played—and the woundeds whistled—all the soldier songs, as cheerily as if there'd never been a war. So I pulled meself together and swallowed hard, and 'membered how many times I'd had said to me, "Now, don't *you* get downhearted, Eve! See?"

Talkin' of the war, they say both the Gov'ment and the old Germs 'll find a hardish nut to crack in Haig, the new C.-in-C. Efficiency's his motter—in fact, the perfect type of cavalry officer, so I'm told, not too much sense of humour and *quite* certain of what's the right thing and what the wrong. Whisky, I b'lieve, helped the Haigs to their money, and it's said that even in his wild youth the C.-in-C. was a canny man and kept accounts.

Bestest love from Tou-Tou and

EVE.

December 24th, 1915.

BELOVÈD BETS,

Here's to you, precious old thing! Many happier returns. I drink your health—in a long glass (ginger beer, of *course*). And in a *still* longer one (of *special* g.b. this time) I drink (and darling Tou-Tou too) to the health and wealth and happiness of khaki and navy blue—the ones, the *only* ones, who in these war-days matter.

I drink to 'em all. To the good, the bad, the medium, and even to the hopeless ones—you know, those who will not when they may, and aren't in love with love, even at Christmas-time. Poor dears! There's an *extra* sip to them. For they miss the best in life, and not all the wisdom of the ages, not since the very first Eve of all, has ever proved it wasn't.

And so once again—here's my Christmas toast: khaki and blue. . . . The dear brave men who are freezing and fighting and falling for us so gloriously and gallantly over there — everywhere. "Husbands and sweethearts, sons and brothers—may they come home again, safe, and sound, and soon. . . ."

Talkin' of drink, don't know really how we're goin' to sustain nature this second war Christmas. Only three courses at our Christmas dinner! Can it be *done?* Shan't we faint by the wayside? Looks, tho', as if it might be rather fun, don't you think, this tellin' people what they may and what they mayn't eat? But I am wonderin' how they'll

make people stick to the rules. Have Food Provost Marshals,

> With tabs of red upon their breasts
> And even on their undervests ?

Should think they'd soon get even more fed up with food than Lord Athlumney and his Staff with legs and things at the music-halls and places.

On the great drink question, "How *did* you come through it all ?" I asked a man who was telling me some Suvla Bay tales last week of how they'd gone for days and nights on end in water up to their waists and with every scrap of kit afloat on the muddy water. "Rum," he said, "just rum. Rum about every hour. And *hot*. I'd saved my spirit-lamp by a miracle from the wreck, and that's how I saved myself !"

So I *do* hope the dear things are getting it reg'lar out there in the cold and damp and awful mud of Flanders. They say you stand in mud, sit in it, walk in it. You eat it, drink it, and almost think it. Certainly you dream it. And rum's *the* only way to forget it.

> Little swigs of S.R.D.
> Tiny tots of rum,
> Make the Boches sit and think
> Where the noise comes from.

I lift my glass, and so does Tou-Tou, to *them !* No heel-taps.

Yours, Christmasily,
EVE.

January 15th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

Those old Parliament men have been so fearf'ly in the forefront lately that positively even the war's been taking a sort of a back-seat while the Ministers and people tried to make their worthy minds up 'bout men and munitions and money, and how best to fix things so's to finish up the war good-and-quick.

Rest of us meanwhile have been putting in a bit of sale-ing. Talk about the temptations of Eve. . . . The resistin' I've done this week. But of course I had to fall, just a little, just to level things up. 'Course most of us can always do without any of the things you buy at sales. But 'cos of the war or something, everything's been goin' at such a *song*, it's really seemed a sin not to buy 'em even if you *didn't* really want them.

The 1916 frocks, by the way, are *very* very. I don't wonder scarflets of " flesh " tulle are a positive necess o' nights. Less stuff than Tou-Tou takes for his patriotic bow and a few beads or something is lit'rally *all* we're 'lowed in the way of a top part for evenings now and—yes, I know I oughtn't to talk frocks and frills and that sort of thing when we're all really feeling rather dredf'ly heart-achy, and some of us, most of us, just fairly eaten up with suspense and anxiety.

But you *must* laugh so's not to cry these days, 'specially when sometimes you go to see a wounded warrior in his hospital and right in the middle of

bein' simply 'bominably cheery it comes over you sudden-like that you won't ever dance again till morning with this dear man or that. No good, you know, this child 'tending she's one of those fearsome females who despise mere male men. 'Cos, well, you know, she's not. And it's quite a t'rific relief, I don't mind telling you, sometimes, when a tactful "Well, Tou-Tou, and how's Eve ?" starts the ball rolling different and gives you a chance to blow your nose and 'tend it's the wind or the motorin'.

But bein' thoroughly mis'able and

> . . . sitting on the ground
> To tell sad stories of the death of Kings,

isn't 'lowed your Eve *very* often, you bet your dear life. "Why, Eve !" they say, in shocked surprise. "Eve ! Pull yourself together, my child ! Pull your socks up. Carry on, dearie ! Cheerio, old thing ! *Tha-at's* better. There ! M'ps ! I *say*, that *is* a frock ! What I call a *frock*, that is, you know. So *that's* the way they're done now, is it ? Aren't your legs cold ever ?" And so on, till you simply *have* to laugh, you know.

Seems, after those — er — muddy trenches or months and months and months of the North Sea, the cheerful maiden's more to taste than the sad. So *I* tell 'em the tale, I do. *I* pour it all out, I give you my word. All about *everything*—the fearf'l scrapes I've got in and out of, and the things that aren't done never any more, and whose book's been censored *and why*, and what's the revue to go to, and what's Mr. George Graves's worst latest, and

how So-and-so's at *last* got into khaki, and how we're all 'conomisin' away like mad, and who's patriotic'ly lookin' after the birth-rate, and how many ships, regiments *and* padres sent me Christmas cards, and whether the old Parliament's *ever* goin' to bring in conscription.

Which gives the dear things anyway a sort of a workin' idea, you know, of how things are going in dear old Blighty. After which they'll sometimes —but only sometimes—start to tell *us* a few things about the war. But you have to be the simply irrepressibly loquacious kind—and young to boot—to be chatty at all on *that* subject. It's too grim and deadly a business, they think, I know, to talk to us about—or even to talk about at all. There is a limit, I suppose, to our men's endurance, tho' after that Gallipoli despatch—well, you know, I'm not sure really that there *is*.

Yours proudly
EVE.

February 1*st*, 1916.

BELOVED BETTY,

The old American President man, they say, wasn't half "mad" when the Huns went and interrupted his honeymoon, drowning an American Consul and others on board the P. and O. liner *Persia*. Still, when you've only got to write a Note, same as after the still ghastlier *Lusitania* outrage, it hardly seems worth losing *much* wool over, does it ?

Seems to have been decided up aloft, or some-

where, that nice spring weather is also Zep—or anyway Hun plane kind. Which is rather a bore, what, 'cept that I don't know that *anything* isn't better than real English February weather. All the same—dear me, eye-opening times, these war ones, aren't they?

You know, we'd all taken it in like a kitten laps milk, how the Huns couldn't *poss* come while the moon was up—"There'll be a moon" people 've been putting on their invitation cards. And at Dover they weren't 'zacly *'specting* them to drop in to lunch, either. So when the other day they arrived in the bright moonlight *and* came to lunch too, fairly felt like going into the garden and eating *worms* we did, we were all so flustered. Just shows tho', doesn't it—*never* believe what *anyone* tells you, 'specially Governments.

Still, life 'd be a dem'd dull, dreary business these war days, wouldn't it, but for the unexpected? It's the one thing that keeps us going—the 'citement of the perfectly t'rific uncertainty of everything. Not the knowingest of us really has *any* idea of what's going to happen from one single minute to another. Not even the new ranker Chief of Staff, General Robertson, who they say's putting 'em through it a bit at the W.O.; nor K. of K.; nor Wait-and-See; nor even Mrs. Asquith. Nor last, but not least, your Eve.

S'pose you've heard how Lloyd George has commandeered the Metropole—the London, not the Brighton one—for a "shells" office. Wonderful what big ideas these little men have, isn't it? But

s'long as they get enough they can take the British Museum and the Kensington one *and* Buckingham Palace for all anyone cares. For they do say, you know, that we're *still* short of shells. Seems almost incredible, doesn't it, considering the 'normous number of starred war-workers ?

Of course a great interning of treasures both here and in Paris now the raids have really started in. Even the Museum mummies, I b'lieve, have been 'sturbed again, poor dears—which reminds me, you know of course why they've suddenly stopped all the wives and things joining the British Army in Egypt ? They *say* it's 'cos the Gov'ment was *so* afraid of them all becoming mummies. Here, of course, having babies is rather "it" just now. 'Sidered nothing more than barely patriotic to 'pear at least once a year *somewhere* on the front page of *The Times*.

London's so lovely under the stars and moon, 'specially when the great searchlights are "out," that we really seem to be getting almost 'customed to the dark streets. But this new push Calais-way and that horrid, vague, distant East, where our men keep disappearing to, is enough to turn to a pessimist even your Eve—who always wakes up *every* morning perfectly certain that something nice *must* happen soon.

Your, tired of war,
EVE.

February 20th, 1916.

DARLING BETTY,

Zeppy days, aren't they ? Or rather nights. Talk about "darkness visible." (Milton—what ?) That's just about all there *is* visible in London now, soon after tea. Positively a home-sweet-home time we've been having, 'cos when the word goes round that there's possible Zeps every shop and station 'mediately wraps itself in darkness, the while the fire-engines stand to attention and the poor dear specials shiver in their shoes, and we mere home-staying wimmen fairly cling to the telephone getting the latest rumours—and charitably passing 'em on.

'Bout rumours, no one seems to have heard what happened when the curate-men all met together in a mass and 'plored the Bishops please to let 'em fight—or anyway be R.A.M.C. or A.S.C. or something. If they ever do immolate themselves on the altar of Empire, ought to be 'ranged *en masse* as the Devil-Dodgers' Battalion, or the Sky-Pilots' Brigade, what ? And wouldn't they be just fairly snowed under with the mufflers and socks and things worked for 'em by all their 'doring female parishioners ? I misdoubt me tho' that even *that* won't fetch 'em.

The new "hard fighting" in Flanders sounds rather *dreffly* hard, and so it does too in all the other places where our men are keeping the old flag flying. Takes some getting *used* to, this kind of old war, doesn't it ? But the theatres and

music-halls are crammed every single night, Zeps or no Zeps. Nero was a wash-out at the fiddling game 'pared with us, wasn't he? And tho', of course, one knows it 'll be "all right on the night" and all that sort of thing, sometimes one can't help feelin' that goin' on with everything as usual as *well* as the war *is* a bit of an undertaking even for old England.

'Course, I know all about Waterloo and how they danced at Brussels that night, and how it's British and sporting not to care a damn about anything, least of all anything any old enemy can do to us. But *this* is a *quite* new thing in wars. 'Cording to Lord Meath, you know, we in England should live now as if we were in a beleaguered city, and the Government should give us our food in rations—which *did* make the war-over-next-month and England's-all-right crowd furious! Said it was an insult to the Navy that got us our food. And as to rations—things were come to a pretty pass if we were to start in copyin' Germany!

Reminds me, aren't our Admirals talkin' to us for our good? Quite a relief to listen to Father Bernard Vaughan for once. "Keep on killing Germans—that's all!" is what that ecclesiastic says, you know. Which is also our sentiments, me and Tou-Tou. But Admiral King-Hall told us last week that the war was all our fault, or nearly—we'd brought it on ourselves 'cos of our wicked modern indulgence in the Higher Criticism. Which bein' interpreted I s'pose means, darling, that people don't always take even the Bible *au pied de la lettre* these days.

But the funniest of the lot's Admiral Beatty. *He's* one of those who put a period on the war—they're so clever in the Navy, aren't they? The war 'll go on, he says (1) till we have a Religious Revival, (2) till we are Stirred out of the Stupor of Self-Satisfaction we're Steeped in (Help!). And it's no good even to begin to count the days to the end until we can do it (*a*) humbly, (*b*) prayerfully. Now, isn't that a real startler in attitudes from the Service that's always *so* sure that all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds?

Yours prayerfully,
EVE.

March 1st, 1916.

BETTY MINE,

You wouldn't b'lieve how *womanly* we're getting! Work-parties are the *rage*. And what 'muses me is how the winsome war-workers always bind their heads up *à la* Red Cross sister and garb themselves that way, too. Very becoming, you know; and I s'pose head-dress and uniform *do* help after you've sewn about the fifteenth shirt for soldiers. But they do say that gags 'd be really more useful than anything. The *talk* that goes on in those work-rooms . . .

Rather a blow, by the way, when Lord Grenfell at the Horticultural Society's Show last week said we simply *must* grow vegetables, and didn't even *mention* flowers. Gardening's been the *last* cult we thought the old war 'd interfere with—so innocent and healthy and all that, you know, and *so* smart.

The Very Best people are all simply mad on Japanese gardens and sunk ones and water ones and pergolas and rose-walks and herb-runs and lavender hedges and all the rest.

The talk of the town's all of money, money, money; and we're watchin' out fearf'ly interested to see how the new War Savings Committee is going to start in to make people save 'cos of the "grave condition of national finance." Which even that most irrepressible of optimists, the P.M., now finds not only a serious but a "staggering" burden. There's at least one millionaire among 'em, and a few more not eggzacly paupers, you know—Lord Curzon f'rinstance, and the Archbish of Canterbury, and Lord Burnham and Lord Balfour; and p'r'aps to the mere outsider it *doesn't* look as if domestic thrift's quite the sort of subject for these kind of people to give advice on to those who support life on £2 a week as against their £200 or so.

Still, there certainly is quite a lot of economy goin'. Closing down the houses you don't want and cutting down the courses at dinner f'rinstance, and talking about giving up your maid. But even then I s'pose we're still left with lots more luxuries than's really necessary to support life. There's a story the Germ women are selling their wedding-rings to pay for the war. Haven't heard of anyone goin' to any lengths like that here, have you? But really, you know, we get a bit discouraged at times. *Did* you hear of that canteen secretary person who wrote to the papers the other day to say it 'd be much better if the stream of "fitful, irresponsible,

capricious and easily offended lady workers" would do their own house work and so set free the *real workers?* Great mind to take along Tou-Tou to *bite* her, I have.

The crocuses are all blazing away on the grass in the Park, and the trees bursting into bud, and the birds chirpin'—another spring and *still* that awful war! Tou-Tou and me we're fair fed up with it we are. Really, if they ever do fix up about that new Air Minister they say we simply must have, I think I'll have to get him to fly with me. There must be *somewhere* where there isn't a war!

Yours flightily,
EVE.

March 30th, 1916.

BETTY DARLING,

Spring is here—if there *is* a war! Proof No. 1 is that there's a positive *rash* of new hats. No. 2 the extra special 'fectionateness of my letters from khaki and navy blue—

> In the spring
> The young man's fancy, etc.

No. 3 the simply *frantic* way Tou-Tou's carryin' on.

You never *saw* such friskiness. Tries to understudy the traditional spring lambkin, jumpin' off the ground four feet at a time, and to hell with his Peking Palace dignity, whenever he scents a ghost of a chance of a good old gambol. And too *dreffly* full of beans for words, 'specially of course when I'm sleepy or writin' to you. And flirtations too—

his intentions towards any young Peke things he meets in the Park are strictly dishonourable, I'm sure. These bachelors, you know. They're *so* rare and precious ('cept, of course, in Whitehall and places) that what are left are getting a bit above themselves. That's what I think, anyway.

Great show, by the way, at the Navy Debate—me behind Ye Grille and all the stars on the floor. Of course, as usual, it was Colonel Winston Churchill (yes, that's the right title—*isn't* it funny ?) who provided the afternoon's supply of ginger. Sez his four months at " the Front " have cleared his mind —in other words, he's changed it again. To end up we had some more pathetic remarks from a gentleman all about how those bhoys, those lads, those *very* verys, the officers of the R.N.A.S., *will* dash about town in O.H.M.S. cars *with* young females, not only contrary to discipline but wastin' priceless petrol.

London's darker and darker. The new regulations stricter and stricter, and woe betide the wight who lets even a chink of light peep from the bedroom window. But the moon's doin' her " bit " this week, bless her, so even the 'fraid-o'-Zeps crowd are getting out o' nights again—'specially the ones who take what's said at Westminster for next door to gospel. Where they've just told us, you know, all about how London's air defences are now " completed on a great scale " and how the anti-aircrafts are being taught to shoot. So that's all right.

Been readin' " The Widowhood of Queen Victoria "—dear me, *what* a long way we women have

come in fifty years, haven't we? F'rinstance, *can* you 'magine your Eve in converse with, say, Mr. Lloyd George, chastely and almost supermodestly referrin' to herself as "a poor, helpless woman," as the Queen and Empress did to Lord Canning? And this too's a priceless bit of ancient history, what?

Queen Victoria considered that the chief duties of a woman were to be prolific, to adore her husband, to dress soberly, manage economically, and to forswear intellect. . . .

M'ps! 'Specially the prolific part, with Mr. McKenna fairly *hatching* Budgets, and all the servants gone to make munitions, and last not least, all the husbands gone to the war. And the forswearing intellect touch is rather *vieux jeu*, too. After all, we can't *all* be in a *revue* chorus, and that's almost the only place left now, I s'pose, where brains are at a discount.

But I liked the Palmerston story. A lady once told "Pam" that her maid objected to the Isle of Wight because its climate "wasn't embracing enough." "What would you do with such a woman?" she asked. "Take her to the Isle of Man next time," replied the knowing P.M.

I *must* fly. Tou-Tou's scrabbling like mad at my *best* silk stockings to 'mind me that it's time to start for that "walkie" there's been such a lot of chat about. To-day he's goin' visiting. Woundeds, of course. They think him a peach of a Peke, tho' one of 'em did say yesterday, "Wy, miss, your pore littel dog's bandy!" Think of it! And he with the

wonderf'lest bowed and feathered legs in the U.K. Oh ! Hell-p ! He's bit me ! Kisses from self and T-T. Yours,

EVE.

April 15th, 1916.

DARLING BETTY,

Those of us who aren't laid low or else just arisin' from a bed of influenza have got Tabitis, seems to me. It's a new Staff disease, and it's broken out very virulent in the British Army. You see, there are such lots of men doing very important things that there weren't enough pink bits to go round. So they've been thinkin' very hard in Whitehall, and now there's two new kinds, blue and green, and I really don't think anyone can have got left out *this* time.

Positively a norgy of colour, it is, to walk up Piccadilly or down Pall Mall 'bout lunch-time. And oh, the swank of the becoloured ones ! You know how men are in new clothes—outwardly nonchalant, but inwardly fearf'ly pleased and happy and coyly hoping someone 'll notice something. P'r'aps the outbreak's the beginnin' of that return to Nature they tell us the war's goin' to bring about. The male bird's always more brightly plumaged than the lady, and April's the courting month, what ?

Some Budget, wasn't it ? What with the horrid old income-tax five bob in the pound and our cars taxed three times as much, positively have to become "the thing," won't it, to forswear Rolls-

Royces for London Generals. Not that there are many signs of anyone givin' up their cars, Budget or no Budget. Shinin', hummin', buzzing cohorts of 'em there were outside Christie's for the Red Cross sale the other day. And oh, darling, inside . . . Talk about temptation! I'm sure that funny old thing, St. Anthony, never was put through it like we are. The pictures alone . . .

Of course, I succumbed. We *all* did. I can resist anything except temptation, as Oscar Wilde or somebody said. And anyway that's the only way to get rid of it, as my *first* namesake decided ages ago. And besides, the cause! One really feels it's hardly more than one's *duty*. Even if bits of lacquer or oak and old Sheffield and Georgian snuff-boxes and miniatures and ivories and fans and all the rest of it aren't 'zacly war-time necessities—well, this isn't ord'nary 'stravagance like the *very* 'spensivest, gossameriest silk stockings, or a dozen or so of everything in *crêpe de Chine*.

Don't know whether it 'll really make much diff, I'm sure, that extra bit of tax on theatre-tickets. But twelve-and-six a time for just droppin' in on the last hour or so of something thin in *revue* is a bit thick, isn't it? Mr. McKenna's not of course the dancing sort quite. Anyway it doesn't seem to have 'curred to him to tax dances yet, tho' he might have had a brain wave that way if he'd been to a few of the very latest. . . . Declare at the last I've been to there were as many roses and orchids and as much bubbly to drink and hot things to eat as in our palmiest peace-time days. Talking of drink,

it's been tacked on to a lot of people, but I believe it was really Lord Dunedin who was dining at the teetotal Palace one night when the Zeps were expected. "If they come," said H.M., "we'll all have to make for the cellars." "I suppose, Sir," said Dunedin wistfully, fingering his crystal goblet of cold water—"I suppose we couldn't go *now?*"

Your still Bacchic
EVE.

May 1st, 1916.

BETTINA MIA,

Spring! Yes, I know I've discovered it before, but you can't have too much of a good thing, can you, 'specially in war-time. If *only* there weren't a war how lovely everything would be. In the Park, where our poor wounded men hobble about, the trees are all budding and sprouting *just* as they always did, and the grass is greener than emeralds, and the entrancing things in the Baby Walk, two-legged, four-legged, and prone in prams, more allurin' than ever.

As for my fluffy, furry Tou-Tou, dear sweet thing, he gallops across the most forbidden places, with the fire of spring burning in his doggy little veins, obviously not carin' a damn even for park-keepers. And the daffs are dallying and dillying, and we're in our new spring hats, same as Staff in its new spring tabs.

Can't help being just a *bitty* bucked by it, can you, Betty? Even when things aren't going any too fearf'ly well—it's fairly got on our nerves these last

days, you know, that blessed word Mesopotamia! And always at the back of one's mind, whatever we're doing, there's the rather ache-y thought of our men, all those we've lost and all those we may lose.

Not that there's much time to sit about and mope—we're welcomin' in the May with a mass of weddings, charity mats, "days," Shakespeare celebrations for his tercen-something or other, new plays, piccys at Burlington House, Beecham opera, etc., etc. Old Shakespeare's to be "honoured" with *Julius Cæsar*—oh *dear!* But, anyway, it's always amusing to see such bored moderns as, say, Dennis Eadie and Gerald du Maurier swanking around and spouting heroic blank verse in bare legs and sandals and armlets and togas and things.

So very boringly a man's show, *Julius Cæsar*, I always think, don't you? Only one or two very washed-out females in the play s'far as I can remember, tho' why such a scarcity I don't know. I mean, Julius was quite one of the lads, you know, wasn't he, tho' old Brutus of course wasn't much class—always strikes me as a sort of a s'perior Labour member. The old gentleman—Shakespeare, I mean—won't be decently forgot and put away tidily on his shelf again for at least a week, what with pageants of him indoors, and a Medallion Day out, as well as the Abbey Service.

Really think the immortal Bard ought to be very pleased about it—gettin' so much attention when we're all *so* busy over something even poor old Bill never even glimpsed. Even the dear woundeds

don't get more fuss made about 'em. And don't get quite so many joy-rides as they did either, you know, now petrol's such a norful price, which is rather a pity. They liked them better, I think, than musical afternoons or theatricals or charity mats, 'specially when you sent 'em out on their ownsome. Even you and I can't stand the strain of being perfect ladies *all* the time, and Tommy's been feelin' that way for quite a long time I believe.

Poetry being now the fashion there wasn't half a binge, I don't think, at the P.M.'s daughter's Poets' Afternoon. But the trouble is at these shows the poets *will* not look *or* speak *or* dress or anything half poetic'ly enough. Some of the smart "Souls," in the last word in rather decadent hats and floating veils and lacquer fans, really looked much more the sort of people to rhyme moon and swoon, and night and delight.

What went down almost best was Mr. William Davies's "Moon"—

> Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
> O thou fair moon, so clear and bright—

murmured in a sort of an aside by the small, shy "country" poet. And dear Mr. Walter de la Mare's voice, always rather faint and frail, nearly faded away in the crowd and heat as he charmed us with "Old Susan" and "The Mocking Fairy":

> "Won't you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill?"
> Quoth the Fairy, nidding, nodding in the garden;
> "*Can't* you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill?"
> Quoth the Fairy, laughing softly in the garden.

After these, the nice, funny, beefy Mr. Belloc and the big, burly editor of *Punch* gave us quite a reviving shock. And reminded us of those virile Victorians—wasn't it Morris that a horrified worshipper heard shouting to his "char" over the staircase one morning, "Mary, those six eggs you gave me for breakfast were bad. I've eaten them, but don't let it happen again?"

Yours soulfully,
EVE.

May 15th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

Talk about we women loving to talk secrets. . . . They haven't had such a day out, or rather in, at Westminster for years and years as for the P.M.'s Secret Session. The House was crammed to the last mouse-hole. So's to get a place, members started arriving soon after brekker, and before they'd all come sat on the floor and on the steps and up the gangway and overflowed into the Strangers' and Ladies' Galleries—from which *we* of course were excluded.

But that old Irish business very nearly succeeded in putting even the great question of the hour—the recruiting one—into the shade. You never *heard* such rumours—how the Viceroy (and Staff) were thrown into the darkest, deepest, dampest of the Cawstle dungeons and all the ladies-in-waiting (the younger ones anyway) held to ransom; how the wicked rebels had bagged without so much as a by-your-leave all His Ex.'s polo-sticks, golf-clubs

fishing-rods, guns and what-not; and how a real red-hot Republic was proclaimed with the Larkin man or someone equally outrageous for President!

Meanwhile, so's we shouldn't feel *dull* or anything, the Germ fleet dashed out from Kiel and did a bit of dirty work on the East Coast. And the Zeps *kept* calling—really, be getting quite *public* on this little island soon, won't it?

And when our nerves were well strung up, then our hearts were wrung by the Abbey Memorial Service for the Anzacs at Gallipoli. Such magnificent men they are, such utterly fit, fine specimens of young and vigorous humanity—it was too sad to see the broken ones, all the blinded men who had their place near the King and Queen, and the hobbling, maimed, wounded. And there were very few dry eyes as there sounded, for their gallant dead left behind in that bitter land, the "Last Post" that they blew on the silver trumpets from out the shrine of King Edward the Confessor.

But if there are tears and sighs there are generally smiles, too, when our fighting men from the Dominions are around. Such a cool, calm, *débonnaire* and cheerful crowd they are. They say nothing daunted them in Gallipoli. Certainly nothing daunts them here, not even the most cherished of our own pet little insularities and conventionalities and things. And how they do adore their general, "Birdie"! 'Bout whom there's no superaristocratic, hide-your-feelings-or-die trouble either.

The Military Service Bill—everything male from

eighteen to forty-one—went through the House like *treacle!* And that after all the t'rific talk 'bout anarchy and revolution and the country *never* standing it! 'Fact, I do b'lieve they'd have swallowed an even bigger dose—f'rinstance, Colonel Lowther's bright idea that not only every man but every woman, too, between sixteen and sixty should be roped in quick and set to fight or to war-work straight away.

Next to be gathered in I suppose 'll be dogs, cats and canaries and things—might get us on with the war a bit quicker too, with a few Tou-Tou's on the Staff. But of course from the very beginning *he's* done *his* bit, poor darling, amusin' the wounded ossifers Eve goes to tea with. Only it's fearf'ly bad for his digestion. Nearly bursts, he does, with all the cake and bread-and-butter *pressed* upon him as a reward for bein' so beautiful. *Il faut souffrir pour être beau*, I tell him when he has his after-the-party powder. But of course he doesn't see it. *Just* like a man all over.

EVE.

June 5th, 1916.

BETSY MINE,

If life on the ocean wave, what with the absence of skirts (*and* Huns), gets sometimes fearful boring, let our paladins in blue and gold take this comfort to their souls—Eve in war-time suffers that way too. I don't mean 'cos of the Hun not rollin' up—*that* was a joy I could always have foregone. But 'cos of the simply *fearful* feminine atmosphere.

Women, women, women—really it's a norful war, isn't it? They swarm. At the charity shows—you never *saw* such serried rows! And to say I'm fairly fed up with feedin' 'em with programmes simply don't describe it. In the Park and places—well, one man to ten women's putting it mildly. And *he's* generally bald, or too old for *words*.

"Over in August" is the latest duration rumour. Shall believe it when I see it. But oh Betty, will June *ever* be again a month only of rapture and roses? Last year it was bad enough—Fromelles, Festubert, Neuve Chapelle, St. Eloi, Ypres, Aubers Ridge. . . . This year I sometimes think the casualty lists are even *worse*—so horribly regular, never a day without its quota, and *so* little to show for it. But all the same—lor'! you'd hardly guess we had any worries, not in *this* village. Wallowed, simply wallowed we did all May and June in "days" and things, and there aren't any devastating signs of war at, say, Ciro's at supper-time *par exemple*, where the very latest trots happen, and even talk of food tickets and rations fails to depress.

The Casement trial, "according to ye anciente statute 25 Edward III.," saw some terrific wangling, of course, to get front seats and things at Bow Street. But space was very limited, and the wanglers 'll prob'ly have better luck when the case goes along to the High Courts, where they're used to *causes célèbres* and hatted and pearled and ospreyed audiences. The black-bearded, black-

eyed Sir Roger C. *has*, of course, a romantic appearance. But "self-centred and emotional to the *n*th degree" someone says of him who knew him in his Consul days, and now a mass of nerves. And, a K.C. man tells me, quite a bit of an actor—"he's got all the actor-man's invincible vanity, cloaked by an overwhelming weariness." Poor man! Don't suppose the Germ's the easiest taskmaster, what?

Great protests, by the way, against the calling up of our "cherished *matinée* idols." "Are these, too," asks a lady, "to be used as cannon fodder? We women ought to demand some guarantee that they'll be returned to us safely. What fools we English be! We've lost our one poet—Rupert Brooke—already. I *dread* to think what the English stage will be like very soon, when all the young men are gone."

But I don't know, you know, do you? 'Fraid I can't *quite* see why a *matinée* hero shouldn't anyway *sometimes* do a *real* man's job. After all, *we've* sent all *our* idols long ago to

> . . . do things
> And die in far places.

Now it's the flappers' turn, also the idols'. But do not fear! The stage 'll remain to cheer and comfort us, I'm sure—anyway until it's fetched!

Your doubting
EVE.

June 15th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

We *ought* to be getting used to shocks after nearly two years of war. But really it was the biggest thunder-bolt yet—Lord Kitchener's so startlingly sudden end on board the *Hampshire*. Seemed really as if the gods were almost *overdoing* the strafing business, didn't you think so? And, yes, Winston was awf'ly subtle and clever, I know, 'xplaining how we *really* won that North Sea battle, and all that; but not the most silver-tongued orator who ever wheedled a people out of sad humours could make anything but a tragedy of all the men we lost, some of the very, very best of the dear, cheery, gallant boys in blue who've got such very special places in our hearts.

I think, you know, that it's p'r'aps partly the awful suddenness and the bigness of everything that seem to make our naval losses, when they come, almost worse if possible than the army ones. In these terrible sea-battles, all at once they're gone, nearly every one of them, and it's final. There's no appeal, no hope, as there sometimes is on land, that some of them are only wounded and may get better, or missing so we'll meet again some day, or even that we may see them as they sleep.

Dear, dearly loved sailor-men! They died, we know, as they wished to die if they must—with colours flying and their great guns booming, and on the cruel blue sea they've kept and guarded for us so wonderfully, and in the "big show" they'd all

been so long spoiling for. But we, for whom they did it—we're very proud, of course, and very glad of their glory, for pity is not for England's heroes, is it ? Only, oh ! the bitterness of our pride, the emptiness of our gladness. We want *them* back, we grudge so *awf'ly* their youth and all the dearness of them. But the gods love, I know, those who die young and, as Laurence Binyon writes so beautifully in " For the Fallen " :

> They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,
> Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
> At the going down of the sun and in the morning
> We will remember them.

Truly wonderful, as I've said, the way we " camouflage " (the newest word—it's what they do to the guns and ships and things to *hide* 'em, you know) our griefs. Course, that may be our little war-time bit—never to give way and not to be too sad and to keep on keeping calm and cheerful. It's up to us ! And that's how *they* like us to be, isn't it ? When we lose our dear and gallant men there's always the feeling that, as *they* gave themselves for England, to be a little brave, too, that is the least we can do.

> Nothing is here for tears . . .
> . . . nothing but well and fair
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

That's how we steel ourselves to think of them, and for solace—what about being nicer still to all the nice things still left ? Shall us ? Let's !

Your proud but sorrowful
EVE.

June 30th, 1916.

My dear Betty,

I truly think life's really a more breffless business than *ever* now we've got daylight-saving—I mean, summer time. One goes on and on and on and so does the old sun and you positively have to pull yourself together to get in for dinner, and as for dressing—well, *undressing* by daylight's always a bit unsatisfactory, isn't it? All the same, no day *or* night can be too long for your Eve, of course.

'Cept p'r'aps when it's a "Flag" one, or a War Fair one like at the Caledonian Market. My word, but I didn't half want a reg'lar rest-cure after that, I didn't—so I went to bed for a whole wet day and read Rupert Brooke's 'musing "Letters" from America. What his friends said with one accord, you know, when he told 'em he was pilgriming there, was "My God!"

And what struck him very hard was the t'rific *smoothness* of the American face. "Why do they hardly ever wrinkle?" he wants to know. "Is it the absence of a soul?" And what he says of Canada's extra interestin', since we met so many Canadians over for the war.

Canada's an empty land. A European can find nothing to satisfy the hunger of his heart. The air is too thin to breathe. . . . A godless place. Indeed, a new world. There walk, as yet, no ghosts of lovers in Canadian lanes. This is the essence of the grey freshness and brisk melancholy of this land. . . . It is possible, at a pinch, to do without gods. But one misses the dead. . . .

Poor Rupert Brooke! One does, indeed, miss the dead. . . . Poets have prescience, I suppose, or this one might not have written, for the comfort of so many mourning hearts:

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England. There shall be
> In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
> A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
> Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
> A body of England's, breathing English air,
> Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

Bein' the end of June, open-air shows are "it." Lord send the weather's fine, that's all, for I'm only *just* recoverin' from the cold of me life caught under a tree in the Park last week while the heavens emptied themselves of positive *oceans* of rain. Tou-Tou had a show at Hurlingham—poor darling, he does hate life now I've trained him to be a veg., anyway a biskitarian, and to try not to make a god of his tummy 'cos of the war.

Time was when these 'casions were—well, the occasion for something *rather* extra special in the way of chickens' livers and things just to cheer him up, don't you know. 'Cos he simply hates 'em really, and unless *bribed* on *extras* gen'ly let's us all know it by deliberately making the very, very worst of himself and wearing his royal and feathery tail *under* instead of over his fluffy little carcass.

We've been selling things in Eaton Square—for funds to send veg'ables and things to the Fleet. In fact we're ending up the month of roses in a positive debauch of charitable endeavour, 'cludin'

a 'Conomy Exhibition which ought to be very 'musin'. How anyone *dares* even to *suggest* that we women aren't all *killing* ourselves for the war, I *can't* think. There's a perfectly ghastly rumour, you know, that some war economist or other's thinking of instituting women policemen or something, whose duty it 'll be to ask any young female thing seen "restaurant-haunting" or "shop-gazing" what *she's* doing for her country. They say even the Flag-Day girl is to be taken in hand; but with another France's Day and Russian (the favourite among the Allies) shouldn't think they'll conscript *her* yet, 'cos if we really all do start in on eight-hours-a-day munitions or something, who'll there be to stand about the streets and smile?

Things people are askin' are—are we still conducting operations in Mesopotamia, or has the Gov'ment forgot about it? And isn't it funny of people to foam at the mouth about German opera at Drury Lane, when the country's still swarming with Germans and Austrians, naturalised and otherwise? Poor old Wagner's *dead*, anyway.

Your nothing if not consistent
EVE.

July 15*th*, 1916.

OH, BETTY!

Such dreadful, dreadful weeks! But one thing helped—the way Haig lets us know what's happening 'stead of keepin' things dark for months and months. But oh dear, *how* those awful casualty



lists take the flavour out of life! This terrible Battle of the Somme has made it more than ever "as if the sun had gone out," leaving behind only dear and glorious memories. And yet how cheery and brave those fighting men of ours manage to remain. One hears the French, too, were just magnificent. Kept their line like our Guards do, went forward steadily as if on parade against the most *devastating* fire and flame and gas and all the rest of it.

But, like the Guards, they've done years of soldiering, haven't they? Our new army had never even thought about such things before war came. All they, poor dears, know of war, and how it sears man's soul and takes the uttermost from him, they've had to learn in that awful school of experience over there. But they've fought and died, as someone says, "as tho' the new army would stand or fall in history according as each single one of them carried himself." We shall never never be able to make up to them, shall we?

'Minds me, there's quite a lot of discussion whether it's quite, you know, in the picture and all that, the wounded pouring in as they are and pleasure goin' on *just* as usual. The best new *revues*, they say, have cost simply thousands of pounds and oceans of labour to bring out, and there's the opera (where we don't go in sackcloth and ashes), and *dozens* of "little" dances—these all for "the poor dear boys on leave," of course. And the great Flower Shows —really at Holland House last week the only thing there seemed to have been a Great Push in was,

not war, but sweet-peas and roses and larkspurs and carnations and the rest.

There's too much talkin', they say—'bout war secrets and military plans and things, I mean. But short of *gaggin'* 'em I don't see how they're going to stop it, do you? *The* three biggest talkers in London have the *entrée* everywhere, as everyone knows.

And there's been *another* row 'bout war charities. Perfectly 'pallin' revelations all about hundreds of pounds collected, but never distributed—'cept, p'r'aps, in the home circle of the collectors! And *how* careless people are giving their names to things they don't know anything about. But I think it was more the Push than any scandals 'bout where the money goes that's made the last one or two charity show affairs such fearful frosts. Pos'tively don't know what we *should* have done if the people there to *sell* things hadn't turned buyers too. And we were also useful to provide an audience for such stage stars as did turn up to amuse the masses.

But it was very very ghastly, and no wonder there's been a bit of an exodus to the country. To lead the Simple Life, you know. Not that I've noticed much subsisting on beans and barley water, or beef and beer either. Dining even "quite quietly" anywhere still means a six-course spread, and even the people who'd like to 'conomise won't be let by their cooks. *Vide* the tale of the cream. A would-be 'conomist decided she'd have no more cream for the duration. But when the bills came in there was the cream on 'em all right all right. Enquiries brought out that she'd said *she* wouldn't

take cream. She hadn't said the servants' hall wasn't to either.

Just heard, by the way, that this is a War Savings Week, so I've decided I won't after all give Tou-Tou that bone I promised him. Must encourage these things, you know. And the weather keeps on bein' so *filthy* that really it almost makes you *feel* that way. Did you *ever* know such a weepy, grey-skied, Arctic summer ?

Your shivering in chiffon
EVE.

August 15th, 1916.

MY DEAR BETTY,

'Straordinary, as I've said before, how war encourages the marryin' habit. And babies are goin' fairly strong, too, though you do read in the papers every day all about the perfectly *disgraceful* low birth-rate, and what wicked women we are not to keep on keeping on, and how not the horrid Hun but the Missing Babe 'll be England's downfall if we're not more 'dustrious.

Takin' to plain speaking tho', aren't we ? Good thing the blushin' maiden's a wash-out. Or positively she'd stay tomato-hued all the time; there's such a *rage* for sayin' the kind of things and discussin' the sort of subjects she wasn't *supposed* to know nothing about when, as Ethel Levey says, grandma was a girl.

Talking of plain words for pink people, it takes some doing to make the Commons thoroughly cross and nasty—even Ireland can't manage it often. But

it got its shirt out all right over the Mesopotamia muddle. They *all* lost their tempers—Mr. Asquith the baited as well as the baiters—and strong language like "criminal" and "negligent" and "terrible" and "shameful" and "scandalous" fairly hurtled around.

Course, nothing really *happened.* Never does, hardly, in politics, does it? And I suppose the only thing that could have happened was to shoulder the blame on to someone and punish him. But *that's* not done either. Really quite a nice easy game to play, you know, this political one. You just sit tight in your dug-out and none of the enemy's very heaviest shells can poss'bly reach you. And such a thing as a bayonet charge by the rank and file no one ever dreams of. Pity it's such a dreff'ly *gentlemanly* H. of C., don't you think? If they'd only be a bit *rude* now and then, there might be at least a chance of *something* happening or *someone* getting strafed.

All the same, somehow, somewhen, we *do* get things done, we British, don't we? And how some of the Allies—Russia, for instance, where we've simply been pouring in men and money and guns and munitions—would get on without us, mistakes or no mistakes, I don't know. Rather like the story in Miss Macnaughtan's "Woman's Diary of the War" of how two French officers once opened the door of the soup-kitchen, that was such a godsend to the troops at Furnes, and when they had had a good look said, "English, of course! No one else ever does anything for anybody!"

In this third war August people are beginning

to leave off telling us when it 'll end, I notice. Those old Zeps, you know, do bring war home to us a bit, whatever else they don't do. And cuttin' down the petrol's "learned" a few of the optimists 'bout there bein' a war on too, tho' I have heard people say that in the country and places they like it—makes the streets quieter and the roads like real country once again.

As for Tou-Tou and me, we get about so much on our own poor feet that we're fairly worn out already, we are, or at least some of my shoes look a bit tired of life. But wasn't it *just* like a man to suggest, as one's just done to me, that the solution's to wear real, regular, sensible boots? You know—all leather and buttons and what they call "proper" soles nearly half an inch thick. Men are so ignorant *and* unpractical, aren't they?

S'pose it 'll come to going back to the good old horse habit—sitting in a victoria or barouche or something, like the dowager duchesses and princess people do, and being dignifiedly "drawn" along 'stead of goin' hell for leather in our erstwhile poor dear dashing 60 h.p. Daimlers and things. Well, be restful, anyway. I shall knit, I think, or read my letters, and it 'll be *very* good for Tou-Tou, who really *was* getting a positive motor-maniac. Used to drink in air till he got positively *blotteau* on perpetual motion, and he'd make life quite unbearable with his sulks when I only even hinted he wasn't going out in the car, not to-day.

Your footsore but patriotic

EVE.

September 1st, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

Rather grilling behind the Grille the other day—but we cooled down a bit when we found Mr. Lloyd George fairly wrappin' himself up in discretion about his Army Act amendment. You know what it was all about, of course—female wangling. In other words, petticoat influence, or *cherchez la femme* at the War Office. There's going to be a big case about it, but I don't think they'll get much out of *us* in their old courts. Luckily the wire-pullers are all fitted with fair-sized think-boxes. Beauty may be the most important thing in all the world—Eve 'd be the *last* to deny it—but to be a real top-hole W.O. wangler you do want a *few* brains *with* it.

Whether the war is or isn't purifyin' Society so much as some people hoped is rather exercisin' our minds just now, by the way. It's quite certain the only way to make a party really "go" these days is to hire the Grafton and Ciro's nigger band if poss, and mix everyone up together, stage and stalls, good and bad—you know the sort of thing. 'Course I'll not deny you *do* get some *rather*-rathers p'r'aps this way, but you've got to do it—if you want the goers to turn up.

But if you'll b'lieve me there are *still* hostesses of the more Victorian set who like to know everyone at their parties. One went so far the other day as pos'tively to refuse admittance to a certain well-known crowd who came along from a *very* cheerful

dinner at the Berkeley without the formality of having been asked. And the new manners also jar on the more sensitive products of a bygone age. A study in the horrors was the face of one when the dancing partner of one charming lady (you can guess her name if you like) at a recent little dance was observed to be neatly imprinting warm salutations on her snow-white neck all the way round the room throughout the last word in fox-trots. But I call it waste of energy, don't you, to worry 'bout what other people do s' long as one does what one likes oneself.

Love and kisses from

EVE.

September 30th, 1916.

DEAR BETTY,

Who was it wrote

> Time, you old gipsy man,
> Will you not stay,
> Put up your caravan
> Just for one day ?

And was there *ever* such a worker of miracles ? Not many years ago, is it, since anyone with any sort of " stake in the country " had really a hard job of it to find words bad enough for a certain little Welshman of Whitehall ? Heavy fathers and husbands simply fell over themselves saying fearful things 'bout demagogues and hen-roost robbers, and tried to make the Clicquot curdle in our veins with gloomy forecasts of how there'd be nothing to drink but water soon—and not much of that if someone didn't stop him.

But now. . . . Now we positively hang upon the lips of Mr. Lloyd George, Minister for War—who at the moment, you know, is on the "cheery" tack. The whole situation has changed, he says—"It's the enemy, not we, who's on the defensive now. He has lost his tide, *we* are pressing *him*, and I think in the dim distance we can see the end." But—and 'cording to Winston there are several buts—the old Hun's nowhere near the end of his resources, all the same. His armies are just as numerous, his equipment as formidable. We want more men, more money, more guns, more everything, and as well all the courage and all the endurance of our race to convert the work begun into final and complete victory.

The trouble is with England that whenever anyone says anything at all cheery everyone else rushes to the conclusion that it's all practically over, and only a matter of a few minutes before we wipe the Hun in his millions clean off the face of the earth. Truth is, it 'll go on for at *least* another year, of course, this awful war. Prob'ly more. And to deal with it really prop'ly we ought *all* to be war-working—"Not only in parts, but as thoroughly as if it were going on for ever."

Some of the shipping profiteer people aren't half furious with the ex-First Lord for putting the Gov'ment up to takin' over the shipping show. It's the shippers and their unholy profits, of course, that are making food prices go up so 'normously. They say, you know, that only to own any sort of old barge that 'll carry war necessities is to be set

straight on the road to a palace in Park Lane and a mansion in Surrey and a moor in Scotland.

'Course they've simply *got* to come, and the sooner the better—bread and meat tickets and meatless days and things. Sure *I* shouldn't mind, but I'm 'fraid Tou-Tou 'd always be losing his, *or* eating it. S'pose they 'd give him one, by the way, or—horrid thought! Should we share? His appetite's got simply 'normous, you'd never b'lieve, since we started war-economy and I cut off his elevenses and gave him at least one meatless morn per week.

Talkin' of 'conomies, can't say I feel like patriotically rushin' to embrace the very last—which is that we should all share the same bath-water or only have half a pint each or something. Sir John Wolfe Barry says we're *much* too 'stravagant with it. *His* family has a high-water mark, and he's ruled a line round the household tub so's no one shall get more than three inches.

Seems the poor dear Water Boards and things are feelin' the draught a bit, same as other people, and tho' they're not goin' to charge less, we're to use less. And they're very sick 'cos by Act of P. or something you just can't profiteer with water. *Hard* luck, isn't it?

All the same, you know, Betty darling, I really don't think I *can* join Sir John, not *this* time. There's a limit to everyone's capacity even for war savings, and I feel that here I've struck mine. But Tou-Tou says he's ready—to bar the bath, I mean. Dirty dog.

Yours, still plunging,

EVE.

October 15th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

The Germans *haven't* got Verdun (aren't they marvellous fighters, those "decadent" Frenchmen ?), and Roumania's now joined in, and talk about ink—that's what the streets look like now the Zep season's started again. All the same, dozens of new plays at the theatres, and nearly all of the kind khaki and navy blue simply insist on going to. You know, plenty of tuneful noise and nice slushy sentiment, and no tiresome problems or tragedies or *anything* to make you think—which of course no one wants to after a good dinner. Plenty of time for *that* mental exercise in the trenches or the North Sea, or when you're dead, what ?

Fearf'ly cold in winter and in summer fearf'ly hot is Roumania, so a man who knows has just told me. The women have lustrous eyes and olive skins, but they live in true Balkan squalor and discontent and unbelievable poverty in their country that's "very grey and arid and mostly mountains." The men love fighting—it doesn't savour too much of anything dull or regular. And as there are a million of 'em, armed by Krupp, so they say . . . Well, I suppose every little helps.

Anyway, ought to be some strafing of someone down that way soon, what ? And what a show it must be in and around Salonika—our men and the French and the Russians and the Italians and Serbs, and a few Indians and Senegalese. They say the native (and the German) looks on with delight as

the busy Britisher builds for the use of all and sundry (and free, *gratis*) the finest roads they've ever seen in that part of the world.

Here at home we've, as I say, started in for a cheery tho' Stygian winter with amazin' fortitude —don't make no diff to old England spending six millions a day on the old war evidently, 'cos the way it's being *poured* out all round's simply amazin', it is. The *frocks* at the smart feeding and dancing places. . . . And the streams of obviously most expensive young things. . . .

But p'r'aps he was a little bit hard on them, the man who's been through the whole what he calls b——y business ever since August 4th, 1914, who watched with me the other day a *very* fresh crowd dining and wining and dancing at a "certain" club. "My God!" he said, "what a waste! What a *waste* for even one good man to die for such a crowd as that!" And there were some of our Very Best amongst 'em.

Been fearful flutterings in "club circles," you know, 'bout the cruel and unfeeling and really *horrid* way the tiresome Gov'ment's been commandeering the more 'normous of the clubs for the war. Bad enough when they took away all the men-servants and forced females even into the sacred precincts of the members' dining-room, bursting with Bishops and things, at the Athenæum. But if they're going to take the clubs themselves . . .

'Course the National Liberal doesn't *so* much matter. I mean, it's not 'zacly a historic building,

and, as someone said, any old hotel or railway-station 'd be just as homelike. But the point is, where'll they go to, all the poor old things who used to sit smoking their cigars and sipping their whiskys and settling the affairs of the nation (nothing less, of *course!*) in that 'normous great high room with its walls all tiled like Tube tunnels—"debased lavatory" style, didn't some irreverent blighter, a poet or something, call it once?

People do say, you know, that this collaring of the clubs is just the thin end of the wedge—and nobody knows now from day to day what 'll be taken and what left, as Shakespeare says. Not, I 'fess, that some of the dull old ones 'd be much of a loss, what? You know the kind—where anything in a skirt (a decent one, anyway) is hardly let stand on the mat lest the sight should upset the old members, and where, when you do get inside, you're rushed along like a skelington in the cupboard into a sort of a railway-station waiting-room, like at the Reform for instance, and mayn't be given any refreshment not if you're dying of hunger and thirst—and horror!

Was at the Reform, by the way, wasn't it, where, when someone of an advanced turn of mind ventured to suggest that it might be pleasant if they went with the times and entertained ladies, say, to a cup of tea and toasted buns sometimes, all the married men rose in one mighty phalanx and squelched the awful idea, without a moment's hesitation?

Yours, bearing up,

EVE.

October 30th, 1916.

Beloved Bets,

There's been some fine Zep sport, but Tanks on the Somme is the burden of our song this week—sweet stories there are all about how the great caterpillar things wandered and wobbled on right over Hun trenches and up village streets that our troops hadn't reached yet, and bang through houses and other small obstacles, spitting out fire all the time, and really frightening the old Germs, as well as making our men laugh till they nearly cried. But the best part of the joke is that the Huns say they aren't fair and aren't playing the game. Such an *expert* on that subject, our gallant enemy, isn't he ?

It's getting very autumn-y and we've fairly rushed into the most enveloping furs, but I just love the gold-and-silver October days in London—and so does Tou-Tou. A nip in the air gives an extra fillip, so to speak, to his morning's walkie in the Parkie, and he frisks around with heaps more vim than when he's taking the air more for duty than pleasure with the thermom round about 80 or so. By the way, got quite the proper British autumn feeling, he has. Very nearly sent to Kingdom come one of those rabbits in the dell one extra nice mornin' last week, he did, and you ought to have seen him *and* me fleein' the heavy foot of justice.

And talkin' of hot stuff, they say H.M. thoroughly agrees with General Smith-Dorrien's pronouncements on the subject of " leg " shows and songs of

a *double entente* and all the "undressing" acts and their sad effect on our excited and excitable young army. I don't know quite which shows he means, but of course we all know

> What an awful lot
> A little hour can do,

as they say in *Mr. Manhattan*, and there's no doubt it takes but little here below to overcome the resistin' powers of the new New Army bloods. You see, some of 'em p'r'aps are rather *anxious* to be tempted. Time was, and not so very long ago either, when as mere civvies, not yet resplendent in khaki and leather and brass buttons, no one bothered about them much.

All *lads*, anyway, these days, and a gallant Lancashire Fusilier has just sent me the last number of *The Minden Magazine*—as to which, as a young person wrote to the editor, "I've been frozen for the last two or three weeks, but am quite nice and warm now, thank you!" But as this is about babies, and *anything* like that is *so* patriotic now, I can tell it you. The vicar's wife had written a book which got published on the same day that she had twins. "How wonderful of your wife!" said a gushing parishioner, referring to the new arrivals. "Yerce, yerce," replied the vicar, "and she did it all by herself, with just a little help from the Bishop."

And I like the story of the Capting man who went for a walk in mufti and was met by a private of another battalion, who promptly saluted. "Here, my man," said the Captain, "how did you know

I was an officer ? Was it my military appearance, or do you know me personally ?" "No, sir," stammered Tommy, "it was yer swank that done it."

Yours foreverandever,
EVE.

November 15th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

Are you knitting ? You know people *aren't* —seems to me that if men are fickle in love, women are fair will-o'-the-wisps in the way of work. First year of the war *everyone* did it, even the fluffiest fox-trotters and bridge-players and soldier-slayers. *Overdid* it, of course. Got a surfeit, like King John —or was it Stephen ?—with the lampreys. Now it's merely a home industry and not a fashion at all, tho' 'cording to Sir Edward Ward the men 'll want woollies this winter just as badly—or nearly as much, anyway—as they did the first. And now, too, there are millions more of them.

'Propos, the news from France is really toppin', isn't it ? And the new winter coats and things are awf'ly allurin'. And there mightn't ever have *been* a war to read the list of autumn doings. But all the same, really, if battles and Zeps and all the rest of it go on *much* longer the unthinkable will happen, and the flavour 'll go out of even new clothes. Which 'll be the end of *everything*, won't it ? And I won't get dedicated to me any more perfectly sweet pomes like this one of Gilbert Frankau's in *The Wipers Times:*

EVE.

Mistress of fash—a little rash, but awf'ly smart, and awf'ly *chic*—
I gad about in Belgrave Square and write you what I've done each week,
Look on my pics, O B.E.F.,
For I and Tou-Tou still shall sway our darling Khaki soldier-men.
Am I not simply just too sweet, the fluffy dream you'd like to meet,
And take you walks down Regent Street, when you're on leave, O soldier man ?

Aren't they dear things ? And have you noticed, by the way, how the war, that's blotted out so much loveliness, seems to be positively encouragin' to the poetic muse ? We have lost quite great poets already—Julian Grenfell, whose beautiful "Into Battle" is perhaps almost the best war poem so far—

> The fighting man shall from the sun
> Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
> Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
> And with the trees to newer birth;
> And find, when fighting shall be done,
> Great rest, and fullness after death. . . .

And Rupert Brooke and Raymond Asquith and Wyndham Tennant, who was one of the precious company that brought out "Wheels" as their contribution to the war's literature.

But those who remain have not lost their voices. We've just been reading Mr. Masefield's "Gallipoli" —a prose epic. I wish a copy could go to all the poor women who lost their men out on that cruel peninsula where the land is "coloured like a lion's

skin," and where the British gave "a new meaning, a new standard, a new rating" even to English ideas — never very low ones — of heroism and courage.

The autumn shows have been really almost quite like the old peace-time ones. Such crowds 'bibing tea at the Carlton and choosing war-time cakes at Rumpelmayer's, such frocks and cloaks and head-dresses at the Beecham opera. Clothes, on the whole, you know, these days, even the worst clothes, are so graceful and charming that you have to be the very-determined, low-heeled, despise-men, unpowdered kind *really* to look a downright wash-out. Seems to me, too, there's great possibilities in get-ups for the Land there's so much talk about women "going on" just now. Provided only you aren't too *dreff'ly* bandy, knock-kneed or hippy, a sort of a kind of pantomime-boy turn-out is really awf'ly becoming, and the sun's kisses, not to speak of the wind and the rain, have a way of makin' all women look alike—which is a score, of course, for the plain ones.

At Westminster, Man-Power, Ireland, Food Prices, Where the Money goes to, and Pension Reforms, have all been havin' their little shows. All *ought* to have been settled *years* ago—'cept, p'r'aps, the money one, which has now, I b'lieve, outgrown even the wildest prophecies. However, 'course they *are* only men, poor dears, one must remember that, and it's simply no good 'spectin' too much of 'em even if they are paid £400 a year just to think a bit. But you'd really have thought, wouldn't you,

knowing what the Somme would mean in casualties, that someone 'd have guessed we'd want more men, and more and more and more?

As to the perfectly fearful cost of food—well, it was gettin' such a ramp, you know, that even Mr. Runciman at last had to do something. But Lord! what a time it takes—and what a price we pay—'fore you can goad Governments to do things. Not that people mind paying—s' long as it helps the poor old war along. Look at the meek way we hand over that awful income-tax. But what's maddening is the horrid certainty that all you're *really* doing when you pay double and treble what you ought to for every single thing you buy is to pile up the unheard-of profits of the War Profiteer—that most dreadful product of this most dreadful war.

Of course there's a Commission sitting on it—food prices, I mean. There's a Commission sitting on everything. There's quite a rage for 'em. But did you ever know a Commission do anything? And in any case the "findings" of these bodies always happen such ages after all the trouble—aren't there some *still* sitting on Boer War matters? —that gen'ly most people have almost forgotten and care less what the trouble *was* by the time they tell you what they think of the culprits. Time's a great blunter of the edge of indignation, isn't it?

Yours in an autumn glow,
EVE.

November 30th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

There's several wars on at home—as well as the one "out there." F'rinstance, the theatre purity campaign and the raidin' of Ciro's—that was in the interests of "our young officers," you know, upon whom the potency of ginger beer after 10.30 is well known to be tremendous.

But it's 'strawdin'ry how opinions differ. One of General Smith-Dorrien's disciples saw something at one of the new *revues* that he thought so perfectly awful that he went and sent straight away a letter of protest to the Lord Chamberlain about it. It was a horrid blow when the L.C. wrote in reply that he'd been to see the show himself *twice*, and he "*didn't see anything in it!*" Looks like bein' a positively Herculean job for the poor dear General cleaning out our theatrical stables, if naughty old Lord Chamberlains and things are goin' to carry on like that, don't it?

About morals, if H. G. Wells is *any* prophet—and I s'pose he *is* a bit of a one at the game—the war's got to change us women as well as the face of the world. Anyway, in his fearf'ly intriguin' "Mr. Britling Sees it Through" his hero's love affair fails to survive the cataclysm of war. His lady writes to him in pathetic vein. She is "scared" by the war and clamours for his presence. But the idea of spending his days comforting a timid little dear attracts Mr. Wells—I mean Mr. Britling—not at all. The "dear little thing" business, he feels,

" was all very well, but times were serious now, and a woman of intelligence should have something better to do at such a time than wallow in fears and elaborate a winsome feebleness. She passed out of his mind under the stress of more commanding interests."

Shouldn't like to be a Victorian these days, would you ? *Everything* they believed in—dear, nice, kind Germany; clinging females; the Big Ship idea, and hundreds of other things, all knocked on the head by the Great War.

By the way, now " King " Carson's on the aliens' trail, p'r'aps there'll be something done about 'em at last, tho' I s'pose it's an altogether too Utopian idea, what—England for the English you know, and all that ? And there's a lot of chat about how they can't, they simply can't in their little nests agree —the Navy's Air Service and the Army's ditto. Which, of course, makes it frightf'ly diff for the poor old Ministry of Munitions to know who wants what or when or why.

Seems the dear proud things 'd rather die several orful deaths than (what's the proper word ?) co-ordinate. But it must be very awkward to know just 'zacly where one job ends and the other begins. Fearful bust-up f'rinstance, I b'lieve, if a naval 'plane gets a bit above hisself and pursues his Zep inland. 'Cos then he's poaching, of course, and what he *ought* to do is to land on the beach and leave the rest—*and* the Zep—to the milingtary.

They're the funniest new things in fighting men, you know, our air babies. And really do talk, or

rather think, like the one in "My Wife" that I've just been reading. Flying, this one says, is the game, the only game. The Army and Navy are doing their best, of course, in their obsolete old way, but flying is It. And as for the War Office—if they knew their job they'd have every inhabitant of a house compelled to have flat landing-places on top. But do they ? Not on your life they don't ! Old-fashioned ain't the name for it. They're obsolete, that's what they are, only they haven't the brains to see it for themselves.

Out of the mouth of babes, what ?

Love from
EVE.

December 10th, 1916.

DEAR BETTY,

The latest 's a thing on the cinema called "Where are My Children ?" It's for "adults only," and's all about *wicked* "Society" women who play bridge and don't have babies. Do you think I'm adult enough ? And will this make 'em ?

But really, you know, with a several-million-men army spread around *anywhere* but in England, what are the poor things to do ? And even after the war, 'fraid we'll really have to bring in polygamy or something, what ? After all, a half or even a quarter of a husband's better than none at all, isn't it, and we'd get on quicker with the population that way too.

If one husband had, say, three wives, and each wife had three babies, the result would be a quite

nice Victorian family, wouldn't it ? But I suppose it 'd only be the war-profiteer crowd that could afford it. The ord'nary man seems to have t'rific diff providing for even the usual number of wives now, and as for families—aren't we *asked* to be economical ?

What's so nice 'bout life—don't you think ?—is that however horrid things are gen'rally there's always something good happening somewhere. Take these last weeks. Plenty of worries. Terrible, terrible casualties—the price of our push on the Ancre. Some real old "London particulars" that fairly played the deuce with time, tempers, taxis and toilets, and pitch black nights that make goin' out in them trooly an adventure.

In the Talking Shop a depressed note that trickled down and outwards and much argufying and the Speaker *très* busy suppressin' indiscreet questions on things like Man-Power and Standard Bread and Food Prices and German submarines. Also the Potiphar's Wife Affair and the Air Board's troubles and a Secret Session—to be or not to be. And several more war worries I've forgotten. It's the only way, these horrid days of war—to cultivate a rotten memory.

But as a set-off the loathly Germ getting it very warm in the West, with the troops, as the despatches say, "all behaving magnificently." The same glorious old story—"it doesn't matter what the conditions are, or what the defences against them. Nothing stops our men where it is humanly possible to go on." Two *Times* pages packed tight with a

crowded Honours List—and in a war where *all* are heroes it must take some very extra special heroism, what, to get singled out for conspicuous bits? We've lit'rally supped on deeds of dauntless derring-do, and tho' one knew of course that our men always would be brave—being British—it's all the same *very* wonderful, I think, such a lion-like spirit and such amazing gallantry in men who, after all, weren't " raised " to be soldiers.

Here at home it's been one of the sights of your life at the charity shows to see some of our grandest *grandes dames* being gracious *pour la cause* to people they'd have died rather than even be seen speaking to before the war—the new moneyed crowd, the new profiteers, who are springing up like mushrooms all around us. They say some of the profits out of contracts and things are quite beyond the dreams, and when the old Gov'ment *insists* on paying you *twice*, which I b'lieve's happened more than once . . .

All the same—yes, I know it's absurd, but I don't know that I want to be one of the war *nouveaux riches*. *Quel horreur* to be a sort of a Frau Krupp—to know, when you remembered it, that you made your money out of the crushed, broken bodies of the big, brave men who once were tiny, adorable babies. No, much as I love all the lovely things of this world—the cars and the pearls and the pictures and the marvellous garments—think I'd rather, thanks, grow poorer with the rest of us. At worst one could always, I s'pose, get a Gov'ment job with one of what Lord Northcliffe

calls the " twenty-three people who are always too late."

Yours incorruptibly,
EVE.

December 17th, 1916.

DEAREST BETTY,

Have to look before you sleep, as dear George Robey says, these dark nights. Those old Zeps, by the way, gave me the chill of me life when we motored madly northwards to see the fun—in an evening dress and satin slippers. Made up my mind, I have, that I'm not to be inveigled Zep-chasin' never again without all my day-timest clothes on *and* a flask, and p'r'aps some bicks or sandwiches.

As for Tou-Tou, all he asks is a quiet life. Guns, just as he's settled down, he simply *loathes*. I'm afraid he's a pampered pet, and I'm not sure I won't send him out to the war, just for discipline—he's got a friend in the trenches already. But p'r'aps the spring 'll be soon enough, after all, for the poor darling to " join up." He *is* so tiny. If he really went to Flanders now, 'fraid he'd get lost in the mud or something.

They say it's once again simply the limit—the mud out there, I mean. Must have reminded them of Suvla, those who'd been through both, when for days on end they lived and slept with the water up to their waists, all their possessions afloat, and the rum ration all that mattered. Too wonderful

the way they put up with it. *After* it, I imagine, in the words of one of the new poets,

> 'Ell will be a comfort—
> On the 'ole.

'Propos, isn't cataclysmic the only word for life as we live it nowadays? War's very horrid, but it *is* exciting, and that's one reason, I s'pose, why it's such an immoral proceeding. But of course most people don't live. They just exist and take breath. 'Specially women. Tho' even for the most cow-like and cabbage-y living now can't be quite the caterpillar crawl it used to was. Such 'normous things happen, such dreadful things, and *such* amazin' lovely ones.

With, of course, a lot of amusin' trimmings by the way. Woman, f'rinstance. Sakes alive, but the wench *is* in the limelight again, isn't she? Khaki's a commonplace compared with her now she gets headlines in the papers. This sort of thing—"Call Up the Women," "More Women Wanted," "Women Slackers," "Every Woman Also," "Compulsion for Women," "Organise the Women," etc., etc. Awful bad for us, *I* call it. I mean, makes us pos'tively *exude* importance. It's *so* nice to be so badly wanted, isn't it? 'Specially in England, where we've heard so much about in what unnumbered millions we exceeded that really important person, Man.

'Minds me, sometimes, darling, I really do wonder, you know, how on earth it took root and grew and flourished so exceedingly—the good old

notion 'bout women talkin' more than men. Why, if we women talked one *half* as much as men do nothing 'd *ever* get done, would it ? Westminster fairly buzzed like a bee-hive with chat and rumour and gossip last week. And all 'bout things that didn't really want *talkin'* about at all—I mean, 'course a kind of a sort of a change in the Government, if only for the sake of variety, we'd got to have anyway.

And now that the tumult and the shouting's died —well, I *do* hope we'll be able to get on with the war a bit, what ? 'Cording to the bashing, slashing *Morning Post* the new Coalish, with Mr. Asquith out and Lloyd George in, may yet "save the country." Which sounds a bit on the serious side, doesn't it ? But the truth is, my Betty, things *are* serious, and it's only the blind and deaf and incurable who are still workin' the always-optimistic touch for all it's worth—you know, the it'll-be-all-right-on-the-night, and we've-got-the-Germans-on-the-run, and we-always-*have*-muddled-through-and-we-always-shall school. The wait-and-see, shut-your-eyes and despise-the-enemy policy's been too expensive even for England, this time.

So it's a great relief to turn over a new leaf. The Great War "under new management"—well, that's anyway hopeful, isn't it ? And as the Manager-in-Chief is the little wizard from Wales, I guess we'll anyway get a run for our money. They say the Hun hates David almost as much as the Tory landowners used to. But the Allies seem to think that such a *very* Celtic Celt can't be *only* a politician.

And this bein' a young man's war, as Haig and Jellicoe keep telling us, it's all to the good, of course, that the new P.M.'s only fifty something. P'r'aps that's why things have gone so wrong—'cos we've let old men run the young men's job. Forget where I've just been reading that Histology and Pathology—both good words, what ?—tell us how in a man of sixty and over brain and mind ossify or something, with the awful (in war-time) result that they become Arresters of Progress. But I think, you know, that what's really the matter with all these old gentlemen who sit in the Seats of the Mighty in Whitehall and Westminster is that they're *too* clever.

They know so much and they've seen so much and pondered so much and enjoyed so much, that nothing more seems really worth while—'cept p'r'aps to take just a sip or two more of any cup that may still hold even the dregs of life and love. Which are the only things worth while, of course, at any time.

Or anyway that's wot thinks

Your
Eve.

December 24th, 1916.

Beloved Betty,

Happy Christmas ! I won't wish you a merry one. Not this time. The world's such a sad, sad place, our card houses are tumbling down upon our heads, there are tears in so many eyes—how *can* it be a merry Christmas, 'cept I s'pose for

those strange people who even now don't mind about the war. And they say holly's 'most as 'spensive as eggs, and even your Eve don't feel mistletoeish this year—tho', as someone's said, 'course really good kissers don't kiss under the mistletoe any more than really good singers sing in church.

As for our other Christmas joys, you don't hear many people taking up this peace-and-goodwill idea of the Hun, I notice. *That's* not what we've been and gone and got a brand-new business Government for, you betcherlife. In fact, *if* all the secrets of all hearts could be revealed (which thank the merciful powers they can't), I'm afraid the amount of downright bloodthirstiness discovered would be simply appallin'. Peace, of course, is what we want more than anything. But a peace that leaves the Germans where they are—napoo!

Must be a distressin' state of affairs for the padres and people. The Christmas "motter"—peace and goodwill. . . . And here we all are strainin' every nerve and using every muscle and spending every penny to confound our enemies and frustrate their knavish tricks, and send as many as we pos'bly can to—well, of course, there's only one place to send Germs to, isn't there? Or, at least, that's what we all hope to do—once our new Biz. Gov. gets goin'. We're watchin' the way things shape like hawks. Pos'tively. And it's a t'rific relief, anyhow, to've done at last with the Wait-and-See and got on to the Anyway-let's-Try stage.

But, my word, poor dears, the Fateful Four our

new War-Makers—L. G., Lords Curzon and Milner, and Henderson the Labour man—have got a hard row to hoe and a nice coil to untangle, haven't they ?

On the whole, tho', we approve of the new crowd, Tou-Tou and me. As that priceless pet says, anyway they're not quite such an antique collection as the late lamented, tho' 'course they're none of 'em 'zacly chickens—not as we count age outside politics. Even the youngest—Sir Albert Stanley, Lord Wimborne, F. E. Smith, Dr. Addison, the Munitions Minister—are all over forty. But for politicians, 'specially the *extra cuvée* war-selected ones, that's pos'tively precociously young, I s'pose.

But to balance too-giddy youth we've got, of course, a sprinkling of ripe age—Sir Robert Finlay on the Woolsack f'rinstance. (Talk about business men. . . . Fancy earning £10,000 a year at the maturish age of seventy-four !) And dear Mr. Balfour at the Foreign Office with Lord Robert Cecil—a combination that *rather* threatens that we're not going quite to drop the Do-not-hurt-your-brother-Hun doctrine. Both such charming, gentle, kind-hearted souls, you see, and the feelin' now is all for Brutal Dictators with strong square jaws and, 'bove all, business experience.

Well, here's to our last war Christmas ! Anyway *no* more like this one, with its Travel Bans, and Food and Drink Rules, and the Lord knows what else. By the Law of the Land now, you know—or rather, under that awful old thing, the Defence of the Realm Act, commonly known as

Dora—the greedy gobblers mustn't gobble any more, not in the hotels and places anyway. And even at Christmas the thirsty must remain thirsty 'cept in Gov'ment hours. Talk about Prussianising. . . . But here's hopin' and wishing you the best from Tou-Tou and

EVE.

January 1st, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Another year of Armageddon behind us. And—how long, O Lord, how long, until we bash those beastly Huns good and proper? And, gee! but how very nearly three years of it *have* changed the face of the world.

The rich become poor, the poor rich; scallywags and office-boys suddenly popped into realms of wealth beyond their wildest dreams; obscure *commerçants* from the wild North metamorphosed into Whitehall Nuts, running the Great War for us; Social Climbers on the top rung at last, photographed and paragraphed and fairly going it as Hospital Benefactors; highly polished sybarites who'd never even tied their own ties at home, in the days when there wasn't a war, wallowin' cheerfully in Flanders mud, eating meals out of tins, sleeping in flea-bags; and nice little bits of skirt who'd never *thought* of work scrubbing floors, washing dishes, tending Tommies, and what not.

Some of the changes are *rather* tragic, others awf'ly amusin'—f'rinstance, Grosvenor House as the headquarters of the new Dictator of our Daily

Bread. The great Park Lane mansion of the gayest, youngest, richest duke turned into an Economy Centre, a Starvation Bureau, a Food Ticket office—'cos food tickets it's coming to, of course, and p.d.q. too, which is American, you know, for really quite soon.

'Minds me of the little story I've just read in the Clodd "Memories" 'bout American tabloid humour. A man from the Land of War Millionaires was taking a woman into dinner, who told him she was a widow. "Grass or sod?" he enquired. Neat but not gaudy, what? And also in the nutshell U.S. style is—"If John Robinson, with whose wife I eloped six months ago, will take her back, all will be forgiven."

But about this old Food Question that rather looks like bringin' the war home to us at last—doesn't seem as if we were going 'zacly to gourmandise the New Year in, does it? National bread only. No more saucy white rolls and things for breakfast, and we're to be Bread Socialists, too, now—same kind for Mayfair as for Whitechapel. And sugar rationed, and they *say* even cakes and chocs; but Tou-Tou and me managed to fill up as usual any voids that remained after our paltry three-course Christmas dinner very nicely, thank you, with nourishment out of our *Cadeaux de Noël* from Charbonnel and Rumpelmayer and places.

But to grow more food on, there's already a movement for collaring any sort of "unoccupied land," as they call it. And as far as I can make out you've only got to swear some plot or other's

"it" for growing turnips or asparagus or something, and you can jolly well pick up almost any bit you fancy. They've started planting the humble necessary potato—that's getting dearer and dearer and scarcer and scarcer—in the most unlikely places, I'm told, but I *was* glad when Mr. Harcourt in the House prop'ly sat on the people who wanted to plough up Hyde Park. All the same, I 'spect Sir Alfred Mond the new Works Minister 'll be much more drastic. New brooms always are, for one thing, and he's a *very* business man for another.

Tho' of course when it comes to mere common sense, really seems to me *no* man's got any—we women simply walk away from them every time. Take this too perfectly *infantile* new game about restaurant prices. No woman *could* have thought of it—and if she had she'd have dismissed it quick from what remained of her mind. The result's nothing more nor less than a perfect *ramp* for the restaurants. Your food costs lots more, but you get lots less. Really, you know, Betty darling, sometimes I feel so bored with men and their silly ways that I wonder if I won't be a *nun* or something.

'Minds me, hope you didn't forget your good resolutions? We didn't, Tou-Tou and me—it was a wet day yesterday, so we made millions. And such drastic ones that life 'd be a dem'd dull washout if we only *began* to *keep* 'em. Darling Tou-Tou for ever boneless and steakless and even tripeless—a bick or two once a week 'd be positively all that was left to him. And as for Eve—well, as someone

says, if it weren't for men how good women could be, couldn't they ?

Yours, on the path to h—l,
EVE.

January 30th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Life, as Shakespeare or somebody put it, is largely composed of getting *used* to things; but oh, dear, dear, it takes a *norful* lot of gettin' used to, this horrid horrid war. Sometimes I really think to myself, I do, I'll give it up, I will.

I'll weep into the marmer at breakfast, I'll sprinkle the spaghetti at lunch, I'll sob into the teapot, and I'll make it hot—I mean damp—for 'em at dinner. I'll go into the garden and eat worms. I'll turn mouldy, I'll grow olderandolder, I won't do my hair, I'll never shine my nails—I'll be, in fact, anything 'cept the once " bright " girl I used to was.

That's how I feel these days on—well, on the *nights* after the mornings before. Such dreadful days of partings, these. Always one's pulling oneself together and keeping one's end up and 'membering tears aren't done—and *so* unbecoming,

> . . . those scalding tears
> That run the colours out of life.

I think it's rather hard to be a woman when there's a war. Men do the dirty work, but they do get " mentions " and the glory and glamour too. There's no *public* reward for keeping the home fires burning.

However. . . . Avaunt thee, Downheartedness ! Get thou behind me, thou dull dog, Depression ! After all, there's still Leave, that blessed word, isn't there ? And lor' ! what a dust they're sweeping up, all the new Ministerial brooms—working ninety-seven hours a day (or at least that's what they *say*) and never eatin', or drinkin', or sleepin' or anything, *so* busy are they fixin' up the war for 1917.

And after all the waitin'—and—seein', my word but they've got some task. What we're to eat, or not eat, and how we're to get it anyway. When we may drink, if ever. How to turn out that daily stream of all the last screams in planes that Haig says we've got to have. And when, why, with whom, and at what price we may hie us sea or countrywards. And who's to be conscripted and for what, and shall we turn up the lights o' London, and how to make people buy War Loan, and what about some really drastic sumptuary laws or something to stop people buying clothes and pearls and too high boots and too many chocs and other necessaries. S'pose the rumours 'bout these last was why there's such a *nell* of a binge, so I'm told, at the shops. All " economy " buyers, you know. Laying up *crêpe de Chine* for a rainy day.

Looks like a move on things soon, too, in Macedonia, where, by the way, I've fallen from grace 'cos I sed the poor dears weren't very busy or something. " We all agree that you're a very nice girl," the Artillery writes, " but where on *earth* did you get the idea that we are having a good old rest on

this front ? Are your Salonika correspondents *all* in the A.S.C. ? Or are they on the Staff ? And do you really believe we live in Salonika and spend our spare time at the cafés of that evil-smelling and generally objectionable town ? If so, my dear girl, someone's been kiddin' you. Our conception of what you call a 'restful time' doesn't include *strafes* with Bulgars, sudden moves at all hours of the night, heat, flies, mosquitoes (which mosquite oh ! most maddeningly), malaria, rain, cold, mud, and general discomfort. Many battalions and batteries have never been in any town of any kind for over eighteen months. . . . Give us our due, Eve."

And quite a lot more to the same devastating effect. I'm crushed, of course—and oh, dear Forces in Macedonia, *so* sorry. But really I didn't mean what they seem to think I mean. Heavens ! As if I didn't know that *all* our fighting men everywhere and anywhere are having a reg'lar Hades of a time and being put through it, every single one.

As to which—goin' through it, I mean—what of our "Peeress" who's written to *The Times* to say she's given up for the duration her maid, tobacco, spirits, sweets, chocs, theatres, motoring, travelling, holidays, visiting, entertaining, shooting, horses, clothes, bedroom fires, after-dinner coffee, before-breakfast tea, and a few more small items I haven't got room for ? I'm glad I don't know the lady. I mean, one knows the *fatal* effect on the *sweetest* tempers that these long-drawn-out Lents are apt

to produce. After all, life's got to be *lived* if there is a war, what ?

Yet another War Loan out and our washing's going to cost us more—it 'll be a luxury to keep clean soon, and I 'spec there'll be a fashion before long for painting ourselves all over *à la* early Briton, who came out a lovely blue. Only thing against it is the climate—and, of course, all the women with bad figures.

Nice broad-minded new Foreign Secretary ours, by the way. I liked his advice to Lady Ribblesdale when consulted about her son Charles Lister's Socialist leanings. "Give him his head," said Mr. Balfour, or words to that effect. "It isn't so expensive, and it 'll probably be much more use to him in after-life than if he kept selling-platers or ran an actress."

Shows the diff, doesn't it, between what's expected of a man and what of a girl ? Make a fool of himself *some* way or other a man obviously must. But if a girl does . . . However, after the War Office Scandal case, it's proved you don't need to be a girl, or even girlish, to commit the most terrific *bêtises* "for love."

> Youth's a stuff will not endure,
> Come then, kiss me, sweet and twenty . . .

is very out of date in 1917. Youth goes on nowadays just as long as ever you want it to—or nearly.

Yours to a cinder,
EVE.

February 5th, 1917.

Beloved Betty,

They say war purifies and all that, but—well, sometimes I wonder. . . . You see, for one thing, no man, of course, can look after himself when there's a woman looking after him. And as in war-time there's gen'rally about three of 'em doing it, the result's perhaps a little *négligé*, so to speak, on the moral side.

And then, there's such a fell excitement about war. It's a stimulant, and not always to higher things, what? Eat, drink, for to-morrow we go battle-fighting. Or worse, our men do. Not so very surprising that with one accord we succumb when we're tempted to

> . . . seize each passing hour
> And fling it gaily where its fellows lie,

as the younger "Souls" sing in that verse-anthology "Wheels" with which they sought to *épater le bourgeois*. In war-time the light's very bright—and the dark's very dark. When we're in the light we're right on top, and don't care not if it snows. And when we're in the dark—ah! well, then we're downed and outed and nothing matters at all at all.

But these are bad days—even for dogs. Tou-Tou's fearf'ly depressed, and for why? Just 'cos he's got wind of how the Prothero Food Man says we're all to keep pigs and rabbits or he'll know the reason why. You see, there's really not room here for a pig as well as a Peke. So what I've been

telling Tou-Tou is that if he's not to be interned or something there's only one thing for a patriotic houndlet to do, and that's to get his hair cut and 'tend he's a pig, or else grow horns and pose as a goat and provide the household with milk, butter and eggs—or is it cheese? But it's no go, and contemptuous sniffs and snorts suggest quite plainly that you'd have thought his missis would have known better, you would, than even to hint such degrading things to a prince of the blood from the Imperial Palace at Peking.

Seriously, tho', the new Gov.'s very busy getting to biz, and soon—very soon—we'll begin to feel the pinch, they say. Rations in the offing; service for all ditto (and that 'll flutter the dovecotes some, won't it?); parks to be ploughed up; while deaneries, someone says, *must* be done away with—economy's our sole business and Homes of Rest out of the picture. Black undies too I 'spect 'll be one of the next fashions, 'cos starch is food and soap's got "fats" in it, so the less we wash the better—for the war.

And an extra fanatical 'conomist has suggested we ought *all* to wear uniform—women as well as men—then we'd all look alike and there'd be no new fashions and no new clothes. But it seems to me they'd have to change the feminine character very considerable, what, before they fix up *that* war economy?

'Course, though, in a *becoming* uniform there's a simply t'rific fascination—the nurse's, f'rinstance. Queens, princesses and what not are all taking to

the veils and aprons—anyway long enough to get photographed in 'em.

Here's the last word on clothes, just received from South Africa:

DEAREST EVE,—A weekly inspection of the home papers has led me to the conviction that woman as personated by some of our prettiest actresses and society ladies will never really be satisfied and happy until she has been photographed as God made her. Indications seem to point to that being the high-water mark of her aspirations, and if that is so would it not be well to get it over quickly ? Then perhaps the swing of the pendulum will bring us back to the stage where modesty, etc., etc.

Be one way of war economy anyway, wouldn't it ? But as to the pendulum swingin' so far back as to get to modesty again . . . Well, of course, miracles *do* happen, but . . .

Tou-Tou sends fond licks, but he's not for the gay life just now, bein' devoured, simply *devoured*, by awful attacks of the Green-Eyed monster. His last war-time cross, poor darling, he feels is almost too heavy to bear—it's a puppy Peke called Bing (one of the Bing girls, you know). Makes her (and me) the most frightful scenes, he does, and chews up the Persian rug if he's not told about a million times a minute that tho' Bings may come and Bings may go it's he, of course, that's

the only dog in the world.

But it's a hard life.

Yours busy arbitrating,
EVE.

February 15th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Mr. Balfour's told America all about why we're fighting and what for, so now they know. But aren't they quite 'strawdin'ry obtuse for such a fearf'ly wide-awake people ? They do say it's President Wilson—things take a long while to sink in; he's not one of those quick thinkers. Still, in two and a half years you'd have thought he'd have anyway got an inkling, wouldn't you ?

Here, London's so chock jamdam full that Sir Frankie Lloyd's had to tell the hotels they really must make room somewhere, somehow, for men on leave. And if someone dropped out of Mars upon us they'd merely think men had chucked black and white and taken to khaki instead. What they'd *never* guess is that there's a war on.

I've said it before, but it's so amazing 'fraid I'm saying it again—really and trooly wonderful, isn't it, *such* a war and such unrelenting same-as-usual-ness ? Such an enemy, and such touching faith in it all coming right on the night. S'pose it's because if we stopped to think we might lose heart and pine a bit. But whatever the cause it's a fair marvel, anyway.

And it really won't worry anyone much if the Gov'ment does turn down some of the luxury trades and things. I mean, like in America, everyone who makes anything's piled up such millions out of it since the war that it 'd be really almost a nice rest-cure for them just to stop making it and sit around

and count their money for a bit. And not only the luxury-purveyors. As a Soap King confided in my sympathetic ear the other day, "It doesn't matter *what* you charge, the public always pays. My soap's about six times the price it was, but no one buys a cake the less, and I don't hear of any grumblings."

The war's got a norful lot to answer for. Take the very latest suggestion—it's that anyone who jolly well likes to can shoot down deer which trespass on the farmlands and pastures and eat up the precious foodstuffs. 'Nuff to make the feudal lords turn in their graves and *gibber*, isn't it ?

To quote one of our pukka duchesses, "Don't know whether it's because of the new army or what, but really the middle classes and the rest aren't kept in their places half strictly enough these days. The world will never be so nice again."

Or anyway not so exclusive. But I suppose that sort of thing was coming along in any case, war or no war, what ? By the way, latest betting on the end of the war's that it 'll stop when Kitchener said it would—three years to the minute. But the way we're doing things it may go on for *ever*. F'rinstance, Mr. Chamberlain making National Service *voluntary*. Did think that old game had got played out at last, didn't we ? They say they had to have it that way 'cos the Labour party said they must. And if you think that sounds odd in monarchical England—then you're not properly up in matters modern and democratic.

It's been the hardest winter for I forget if it's

three or four centuries—black frost, snow, miles of ice, biting winds, and great gatherings on the first real outdoor ice for years and years in Regent's Park and places. The Anzacs were fearf'ly intrigued. Simply dashed at it, woundeds and all, and took their tosses as cheerful as anything, like the tigers they are.

Can't say as much for Tou-Tou and Bing, who slid about and simply hated it, tho' I was fearf'ly proud to note my *patriotic* teachings fairly sprouting on Tou-Tou. A 'Stralian officer man fell on him—and no featherweights, I 'sure you, are our Overseas warriors! But did he bite him? No. Was prepared to do so, of course, but when he marked the turned-up hat and rising sun badges he gave him a reg'lar wave-the-flag-bonds-of-Empire lick instead.

Your very nipped
EVE.

February 30*th*, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

A bit more like the real thing than most, this Lent of 1917, methinks. Abstinence (which is awf'ly good for the complecsh) and mortifyin' the flesh (not quite so good for the temper) are "done" just now, you see.

But I always think the worst of abstinence is—there's *such* a temptation to make up for lost time and go a huge bust *after*. That's what often makes Lent such a pitfall—the rebound, so to speak. And just as you've got into the swing and lived through the worst part, and rather begun to fancy yourself

in a stained-glass window part, then along comes wantoning—the spring !

When the south-west wind blows the rain-clouds up and there are catkins on the trees and snowdrops in the grass, 'stead of fasting you want to

> . . . feed on the fixed stars
> And drink up the Milky Way.

The glory of spring, and the *gorgeousness* of being young in spring . . . Each is so wonderful, and together they are scrumptious. And in these dreadful days when

> No easy hopes or lies
> Shall bring us to our goal,
> But iron sacrifice
> Of body, will and soul,

one never knows. . . .

It's one of our new soldier-poets, I think—isn't it strange that war should have made verses fashionable ?—who wrote

> One little hour—how short it is—
> When love with dew-eyed loveliness
> Raises her lips for ours to kiss
> And dies within our first caress.
> Youth flickers out like wind-born flame,
> For Time and Death relentless claim
> One little hour.

Only the most unmitigated optimists, I should think, can face this spring of 1917 unafraid—not of failure, of course, but of the bitter cost even of victory. We've got to keep our end up, and, of course, we shall; but it's going to be a teeth-setting business—so say all who ought to know. Talking

of the war poets, been reading X.'s "War Poems." He's caustic but I'm afraid he's also true to life in one he calls "The Diners":

"*They died content,*" he said,
And bent a well-groomed head
Sweetly above the soup;
"*Ah, splendid lads!*" he sighed.

"And . . . (Waiter!) . . . *think!—they died*
Content! . . . (the cantaloupe
Wasn't quite ripe enough).
Real top-hole lads and tough!
A lesson for those swine!—
(Yes, yes—uncork the wine!)

"*You very nearly kissed*
That fearful casualty List?
Ah, precious, you've a heart!—
(What excellent strawberry tart!)
Yes, Haig's O.K., you bet,
He'll smother 'em—and yet
There must be sacrifice!
(I shouldn't risk the ice!)

Parliament opened in a very war-timey way—morning dress with hats, as the Lord Great Chamberlain put it. And in the Royal Gallery—instead of the usual privileged ones, the smart and the important, the wanglers and the influential—just soldier-men, soldier-men from Britain overseas, all wounded, and some of them maimed for life, who because

England calls this day

had come from the uttermost ends of the earth to lend their aid to the Mother Country.

And when the King spoke of "those my Dominions which have borne so gloriously a share

in the struggle," and when my Lord Chamberlain welcomed them in the King's name, the Royal Gallery nearly got its golden roof blown off, such lungs have the men from overseas. It lacked something in fine feathers and lace and diamonds and velvets and sables, this third opening of Parliament since the war, but in their place were better things —our hero men in the place of honour, and a t'rific Will to Win written all over everything.

Must soon cease this chat and walk about a bit —fell off a toboggan hard the other day, and ever since have had to sit down careful-like and engage in a few moments' silent prayer before and after rising. But talking of heroes, here's a bit about 'em from a Canadian which 'mused me.

DEAR EVE,—How *nice* of you to call us heroes! What is a hero? The only thing I can remember being called was a ——. I haven't got any blue ink, so I can't write it, but you'll be able to guess what it was when I tell you it was uttered by a port-every-morning, service-going-to-the-dogs old big-wig at a time when we were being thoroughly "hated" by Hun artillery and I couldn't get our guns to reciprocate.

We really felt quite uncomfortable until a sentry full of valiantry and gallantry remarked, "Thank Gawd we 'ave a Navy!" This is a wonderful Empire of ours, isn't it, Eve? England has produced Bantam battalions, the Anzacs Maori battalions, and now we hear Canada is sending a battalion—or is it a division?—of colonels, real live colonels.

Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.

Yours, still cheering,
EVE.

March 15th, 1917.

Wars or no wars, my Betty, my word but we do see life in this village. Allus a summat. So fast and furious, indeed, does the wheel of existence turn that one hears it was none too soon they went and interned—I mean immured—in dungeon deep in the Borough of Marylebone at the Hotel Central our poor, dear, darling sick-leavers.

Seems too much 'citement—wining and dining and giving us tea, and revue-ing and bridging, and going to all those little dances—is fearf'ly bad for the convalescent battle-fighter who's wanted back as soon as poss to play a more serious game. Apt to send his tempy up, makes him get well too slowly, and last, not least, is a woeful heavy strain on those little accounts of his at the place where all the Best People bank.

He'll be let loose in future afternoons only, poor darling, and *then* with a label on him! No more "Telegraphic Address: Dirty Night," as Mr. George Graves would put it! I foresee some *very* busy afternoons for me and Bing and Tou-Tou. . . . But it really *has* been *most* unfortunate the way parties of all the dances goin' keep tricklin' out right on top of wild exhortations from the P.M. and people not to spend a penny 'cept on War Loan, not to do nothing but war-work, and not on any account to keep the soldier-men up late, 'cos if we did they were much too sleepy to work next morning.

But, of course, it's not the "small" affair, sand-

wiches and a gramophone, got up on the spur, that they're makin' a song about. It's the wild and wet binges, champagne and chorus girls and the Rapidettes of Mayfair, that's worryin' 'em. But the rumour that they're going to put A.P.M.'s on the job of running down—if not in—dancers and dance-givers sounds too 'musin' to be true. I mean, quite lots of A.P.M.'s have been known to dance themselves—and not *only* before the war, either.

Publicity—and the *Daily Mail*—havin' overtaken 'em, I don't suppose, tho', that many hostesses will give many more balls "for the poor dear boys on leave," no matter how many daughters they've got to get off. "We are satisfied," says *The Times*, "that there are whole circles in which the spirit of sacrifice is unknown"—and where no one's taking the *faintest* notice of the exhortations of Food Controllers or anyone else. It also thinks the greater the sinner the greater the sin. "The more exalted the position of the offender, the greater the difficulty of instilling economy into those well-paid industrial communities which are said to be enjoying the war. It is a matter of life and death to this country that there should be no exceptions to the rule of self-denial. If nothing but the pillory will bring these thoughtless spendthrifts into line, then the pillory it must be. . . ." Which is really *very* brave, you know, when you 'sider how very "exalted" some of the 1917 dance-givers are.

All the more cheered, we were, by the great Sir Douglas Haig's optimistic little chat with the French

newspaper men all about how certain it is we'll win, and soon—'cos really it's perfectly 'mazin' that a soldier-man connected with the Court, married indeed to a Maid of Honour, should have said anything at all, 'specially anything thrilling.

What you might call a facer for the traditions. For, of course, it's the beginning and the end of the virtues of the friend of Royals that his conversation is as innocuous as it's polite, and almost diplomatic in its impressive vagueness. Must be, I s'pose, that so warlike are the times they've actually conquered the courtier instinct. P'r'aps, tho', the C.-in-C. feels as I do that, after all, what *would* life be but for the unexpected? It's that something round the corner that *might* happen, even if it never does, that makes this world worth living in.

Yours expectantly,
EVE.

March 24th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

We're not quite without our artistic pleasures, if there *are* other matters afoot. These Ides of March the Epstein "Venus" has held the floor—with the *Bing Girls*, a less futuristic but p'r'aps more cheery exhibition, over the way. The lady, I may tell you, is none the less *intriguante* 'cos no one quite knows where she begins and where she ends, 'cept that I'm told getting her in stopped the traffic in Leicester Square for hours and took a small army of hefty helpers to do it.

But a dangerous man this Epstein to the world

of women, don't you think? To him, you see, the *inner* woman is more important than even the luvliest outer—and who was it said that woman's virtue was man's greatest invention? So it's an awful toss-up, when you're sculped by the new thing in sculptors, what you'll come out like. Instead of that ducky little nose or those sweeping lashes you devote your life to, or those ears like shells or mouth like a Cupid's bow—instead of these, your likeness in marble you may find will display only that hidden passion for *pralines* that possesses you; or that yearning after *affaires*, that deep-down desire to be a Helen or a Cleopatra or a Circe, which is the secret garden in so many women's hearts. Yes, I'm 'fraid, as things are, the practice of the Epstein art's quite fearf'ly risky. Simply couldn't get on at all, you know, if we lifted *all* the veils that mercifully hang between human nature and the world in which it moves and hates and loves.

But Beauty and War don't go together, of course—witness my poor dear once so delightful St. James's Park. The huts they run the war from have now boiled over into what was the lake, where little boats went for little trips and little ducks quacked all day. To stand on the bridge at midnight, or any other time, is to see, not the most romantic view in London, but a perfect forest of what's one of the ugliest things on earth—corrugated iron.

And it's one of the war-time sights, too, to behold the swarms of short-skirted, high-booted femininity pouring like bees out of the unnumbered hives. As

to what they do inside the huts—opinions vary. But as giggle upon giggle rends the air, one wonders —do they ever revisit their ancient haunts, the souls of those statesmen and people for whom, long long ago, the sylvan glades of St. James's Park were sacred to discreet discourse 'twixt tea and dinner ?

By the way, those dinkum children, the overseas officer-men, have now taken over *en bloc* that ancient stronghold in Pall Mall which was once the W.O., and is now the R.A.C. And talkin' of the ancients, what a liberal education in the *bibelots* of our old old world it must be for all these overseas men to visit all our different museums. Must feel awf'ly *fresh* to be as new as that, what ? *We* now always have to live down what our ancestors did before we start in proper. And, as someone's said, that's one of the few advantages of being the scion of an old family—the more aged it is, the farther you are from the rascal who started it.

There's just one thing, you know, that 'll almost make me sorry when the war's over. I s'pose, 'less we marry 'em all, all the overseas men will—well, depart overseas, what ?

Yours, very colonially,
EVE.

March 30th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Rather nice about Baagdaad, as they call it in *Chu Chin Chow*, wasn't it ? A badly wanted cheer-up after that very very bitter draught, the

Dardanelles Report. And rather romantic, and a thought amusing.

Think of it—Britain in Bagdad. Bagdad, the city of Haroun-al-Raschid, the gorgeous capital of the Caliphs, the greatest, most famous, *wickedest* city of the ancient world. . . . Bagdad, to whose glittering court, as showers turn to the sun, came the beauty, the wit, the brains and all the untold luxury of the voluptuous East. . . . Bagdad, the first home of the arts. . . . Bagdad, where magic and romance flourished as healthily as commerce and science . . . where they made, thousands of years ago, a water-course that turned Mesopotamia into the garden of the world.

Of its ancient splendour, they say, not a vestige remains. But let's hope a touch of the glamour—to make up, just a little, for all our men have had to bear out there. Where they never get their parcels, or their letters, or *anything*. . . . Where the heat and dust and sand and flies have simply *tortured* the men from our cool island. . . . And where, as they've so often written me, "if *this* is where Eve took the apple—well, poor girl, whatever she did, you couldn't blame her!"

It's the very next thing in "days," of course—a Mesopotamian one. And not a minute too soon, for "comforts" are rare as roses in December on our Far Eastern battlefields. "Pretty" girls are asked for as flag-sellers—there's been a slight fallin' off, I fear. For 'tween you and me, we're fed to the eyebrows with flags; we could scream at the very word; flags bore us, tire us, annoy us—why,

even Tou-Tou and Bing were sniffy and said they didn't see why they should when I told 'em I thought the *least* they could do as patriotic Chinees was to wave a teeny weeny Celestial flaglet when China intimated the other day that she s'posed it was about time to come into the war if she wasn't to be too late for a share of the swag.

But about that "Pretty Girls Only Wanted"—what a *pull* is beauty, what? Here, ladies and gentlemen, we have one of the eternal truths. Beauty in woman is all—yes, really, *all* that matters. Brains? Pah! What man wants a *brain* to take out to dinner? And does he, I ask you, go to *revue* in his millions to see *intellect?* I *don't* think. 'Course, I quite agree it *would* be nice if brains and beauty grew together, but they don't, never, so why worry? For even when he goes a-marrying, the right kind of mouth or a dinky thing in noses is *much* more important to a man than the most concise opinions on life, politics, or even food.

They can't help it, poor dears. It's inbred. Do you remember in "The Digit of the Moon" the ancient Sanskrit version of how the gods, who

> found no virtue so good as the absence of beauty,

made woman?

> When Twashtri came to the creation of woman, he found he had exhausted his materials in the making of man and that no solid materials were left. So he took the rotundity of the moon, and the curves of the creepers, and the clinging of the tendrils, and the trembling of grass, and the slenderness of the reed, and the bloom of the flowers, and the lightness of leaves, and the tapering of the elephant's trunk, and the glances of deer, and the joyous gaiety of sunbeams,

and the weeping of clouds, and the fickleness of the winds. To these he added the timidity of the hare, and the vanity of the peacock, and the softness of the parrot's bosom, and the hardness of adamant, and the sweetness of honey, and the cruelty of the tiger, and the warm glow of fire, and the coldness of snow, and the chattering of jays, and the cooing of the dove, and the hypocrisy of the crane. . . . And compounding all these together, he made woman, and gave her to man. . . .

Nothing about *brains* in *that* recipe, is there ?

Talking of "days," how they're strafing our nights, what ? First of all, shut up our poor dear darling "sicks" in the wilds of Marylebone. Then put the Grafton Galleries out of bounds 'cos from those secluded haunts, *as* you know, sounds of riot and revel by night have fairly waked the echoes (*and* neighbours) on many a merrie morn. And they say it fairly startled even the Dover Street cats—the *langwidge* of such *revue* and chorus ladies as couldn't get a taxi after breakfast and felt their last night's complexions weren't standing the strain of the early morning sun.

And after the Grafton—the ban on Ciro's ! And last, not least, no khakied lad or cherub in gold and blue may now sup *anywhere* after 10 p.m. Of course the result *would* have been a t'rific increase of home shows—all the hostesses rushing in quick with little dances (and daughters) and lots of nice things to drink, to try and make up for that *gorgeous* dancing-floor, and noisy niggers and top-hole *chef*, and free-and-easy ladies in Orange Street. But with the risk of being pilloried in Printing House Square it's hardly good enough. Daughters must seek the harmless, necessary husband in less pleasant paths.

They say there's simply not one single vacancy for *any* more parlourmaids in the best hospitals for officers.

I foresee nunneries coming into fashion, don't you? After all, it'll only be a return to mediævalism. The plain daughters in all the best families generally were put away in the good old days when convents were rather smart, if anything, and you could always be a Lady Abbess, however homely you were, if only you'd got a rude enough manner and plenty of quarterings and a good fat dowry for portion as a bride of the Church. Everyone says we've got to return to the simplicities. War and the complexities don't mix. It's us for Nature or . . .

Yours, wedded to the world,
EVE.

April 5th, 1917.

MY DEAR BETTY,

It *was* funny to see 'em—duchesses in dozens and the business peers' wives in rows—at Mrs. Lloyd George's Economy-in-the-Home meeting at the St. James's Theatre. The pearls alone, and the sable scarves . . . I just *couldn't* see the duchesses somehow takin' the intimate interest in their stockpots, which, 'cording to the P.M.'s wife, is the Frenchwoman's secret. For one thing, in the big country-houses, kitchens are *such* miles away, aren't they? And he'd be a *very* war-time *chef*, or she an angel in cooks, what, who let even the most ducal nose come sniffing round *their* stockpot?

And I'm taking a taxi first fine morning just to see in how many Mayfair windows there shines forth (in red, white and blue) the Food Controller's latest—

IN HONOUR BOUND
WE ADOPT THE NATIONAL SCALE
OF VOLUNTARY RATIONS.

It 'll look so sorcy backed by the yellow chiffon curtains where they still give the best dinners, won't it? Or where, at that last "little" dance for the poor dear darling on-leavers, the *Bisque d'Homard* was the very fine flower of what the sea gives up, and we drank our healths in no "economy"

> Beakers full of the warm south,
> Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
> With beaded bubbles winking at the brim. . . .

Haven't noticed, by the way, any *rush* to do what someone said we ought to and use our precious square-gardens for chicken-runs and potato-patches. Nor does the Divorce Court Judge's example in planting his window-boxes with turnips appear to be setting a fashion. One hopes, tho', they'll turn up trumps—I mean, turnips—and not be frit to death by wild wire-worms or something. Enuff to sour even Sir Samuel Evans's sanguine and sunny soul to come home to obstrep'rous vegetables after a day in the Courts with naughty people.

'Minds me, whatever's going to happen 'bout the food crops, the crop of Ministers and Directors and Controllers, etc., etc., flaggeth not nor waneth.

Every day the list grows longer and longer—a *norgy* of officialism. The very last's a Potato Minister. There *will* be a binge, won't there, when the fruit season begins? I suppose we'll have to have a Gooseberry Director and a Red Currant Minister, and I'm thinkin' of puttin' in for the 'portant post of Strawberries and Cream Controller myself.

Whispers are abroad of a slight flutterin' in those dovecotes where it's been considered *more* than suffish to give up, say, two mornin's a week to war-work, a National Service director person having given it as her opinion that five *whole*-time workers are worth *fifty* of the part-timers. In future, it seemeth, the young and lusty will not save their faces by pouring out tea for Tommies on Tuesdays, or washing up for ossifers on Fridays. No secret's made of the fact that where they want women, and where they must have 'em, is on the land.

Isn't it frightening? Those that have tried to tell me—and their appearance, it must be confessed, confirms it—there's positively no work, not the hardest V.A.D.'ing or canteening, that's so abso *fatal* to looks. Chat about nut-brown maidens bringing in the corn and merry milkers calling the cattle home—all hot air. As one's remarked, on the land you're either red in the face or blue. And as for merry . . . Venus herself would have looked and felt like nothing on earth if she'd risen at four, sweated *or* shivered till evening, and for amusement, raked muck. Still, Lord Devonport's orders must be obeyed, I s'pose, so, to be in the movement, I'm off to buy a bee—there's simply no room in Curzon

Street for even *new* potatoes. I do *hope* it 'll hatch or lay or whatever bees do to produce the honey. But even if it turns out a dud, Tou-Tou and Bing 'll love it. Only I must watch out they don't sit on it.

Yours buzzily, I mean busily,
EVE.

April 10th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

So America's really "in" at last! Well, well . . . Better late, etc., but we won't be able to call her 'zacly a hustler any more, will we? Tho' they do say that the U.S.A. Navy has really been quite looking forward to some fun some time. Fightin's after all the fashion, you see, and for God's own partic'lar country to be out of the "movement" for nearly three years . . . But now they *have* come, makes you quite breffless, the huge numbers the country that was too proud to fight seems to have to juggle with. Fifteen to twenty millions of men of military age ready to draw upon straight away. . . . Think of it!

Talk about some of us "enjoying the war." In this little land that we love we've known anyway a few war trials—our men leaving us every day and every day returning hurt and broken, or not returning ever; air raids and bombardments and conscription and all the rest. And never even at our gayest have we risen to such heights of revelry as they have in New York since Europe went to war and poured out her millions *in* millions.

Dancing's the *great* craze, led by the Vernon Castles; and the fearful expense of everything doesn't in the very least matter 'cos everyone's got money to *blow*.

Here, so set is Sir Frankie Lloyd upon the primrose path of purity as the proper place for the modern soldier-man to walk in, that really we look like becoming respectable to tedium, and deader than the dodo soon will be our latent passion for dancing in the public places rag-time from Kentucky, Paris and Broadway. But the truth is, you know, as even the fluffiest are discovering, there just isn't time for *anything* much these days 'cept for battle-fighting. "The strength of the brute's stupendous even now," a letter from the thick of it's just told me. "Don't you listen when they tell you the Hun's nearly done. Done! Not a bit of it. Much more like getting a fresh wind."

And this Russian Revolution business—what does it all mean, and what's it the beginning of, and how will it affect us? More effort, more treasure poured out, more everything for poor dear England, I suppose.

> A poor life this if, full of care,
> We have no time to stand and stare,

sings W. H. Davies, poet. But it 'll *have* to be a "poor life," I'm afraid, for once again the great man-power question's *the* topic. They say if they can't get enough from the rejected and Whitehall and the trade unions they'll really have to put up the age-limit to forty-five and even fifty. Which,

of course, the 'thorities most dreff'ly don't want to do. It's this lot that pays most of the taxes, you see, and with a seven or eight million a day war to keep goin', s'pose we *do* want a few businesses turning the money out.

They say, by the way, that theatres are getting it a bit in the neck under the war *régime*. But I haven't *noticed* any slump, tho' really, you know, if *revue* does get soon to the shut-eye stage you couldn't be frightfully surprised. No one's said one funny thing or sung a pretty one at the last fifty I've been to. Made me almost agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw on the subject—"The effect of *revue* is to reconcile me to death"; tho' I wouldn't like to be *quite* as drastic as Augustus John, who says, "All are rotten. I hate 'em." Nicely dined *and* wined, I can always do with anyway an hour of 'em, or say half an hour.

Yours While the Great Big World Keeps Turning,

EVE.

April 20th, 1917.

MY DEAREST BETTY,

Splendid news, isn't it? Really looks as if in *all* their specialities—gallantry, heroism, dash, *élan* and all the rest of the things they never talk about—our men have been beating even their own top-hole record. And though the casualties are awful, everyone says they *might* have been *much* worse, which I s'pose is some comfort. The "heroes" on the top rung are, of course, (1) Sir Douglas Haig; (2) Sir Henry Horne, in command of the First Army;

(3) General Allenby, leader of the Third Army; and last, Sir Julian Byng, whose Canadians chased the Hun from Vimy Ridge in, says the story, absolutely expert style, surging on the enemy with wave after wave of bayonets, taking prisoners in thousands, and doing it all with their usual don't-care-a-damn-if-it-snows-ness.

I keep gettin' into fearful trouble 'cos I don't always grasp their language. But neither do they take *us* always. Like the two Canadians who went to see Tree in *Macbeth* one night. Came the dramatic scene where Mac demands of the physician, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" One of the Byng boys, a Westerner, turned to his companion; "What does he mean by that, Bill?" he whispered. "Why," said the other, "he says, 'Ain't yer got no dope for a guy wot's bug-house?' "

But truthfully we've wanted some cheerin' up, for oh! the weather now that April's here. It's snowed, it's sleeted, it's blown the bitterest winds, it's froze, it's—done everything, in fact, 'cept perdooce, as our newest Allies put it, anything in the *least* like Spring or April. We've *shivered*, back in our winter furs; but of course the spring hats came out—they're like the British Tommy, invincible, undeniable, *above* the weather.

You'd hardly b'lieve it, in the middle of all our anxiety 'bout the war, how the political game thrives and flourishes spite of everything. But last week they fairly outclassed even the news from France, all the rumours 'bout attacks on the Government and how the old Irish negotiations

had broken down again if Sir Edward Carson *is* now, *so* amusingly, ruler of the King's Navee. And this week, too, they're budgetting again *and* discussin' those fearf'lly vexed questions—man-power and the air services.

'Bout the first, they don't seem 'zacly to have *flown* at it across the water, the rather too sanguine suggestion that America, being now our biggest Ally, should help round a tight corner by sendin' along instanter those 500,000 men Sir Douglas Haig says he must have by July. As to the second, very sore subject always the air services, aren't they ? But the men themselves go on from triumph to triumph, takin' no notice of the wrangling in high places. In fact, positively our last word in pets, the flying man these days. To take one out to tea is the summit of the flapper's ambition, and I always wonder who designed the uniform. To be smart and *chic, and* clothed to the chin—what heights masculine ingenuity does rise to ! Slightly stuffy in summer, perhaps, on the land-level. But just think how far down from the top we women have to undress to achieve anything *like* their success !

Last thing in war chat is—couldn't the Navy get itself just a teeny weeny bit more into the picture, don't you know ? They say all the dug-outs and also-rans and has-beens are far from weeded out of Whitehall yet, and that, tho' the Army's discovered it's a young man's war all right, they're not so sure about it in the Senior Service.

By the way, some people are so *very* certain

'bout the war endin' this year that it gave us quite a small shock last week when some M.P. man asked the P.M. to push on with the Channel Tunnel idea "in view of the continuance of the war for some years." Some years ! ! !

Yours, already fearf'ly feddy up with it,

EVE.

May 1st, 1917.

BELOVED BETS,

The poet asks

> What is so sweet and dear
> As a prosperous morn in May,
> The confident prime of the day,
> And the dauntless youth of the year ?

Ye Merrie Monthe, in fact. But merry, I'm afraid, this May just simply *can't* be. The mourning month's more like it, alas ! For tho' we're very proud and try even to be glad because of the splendour of our "dauntless youth," there remains the thought, as a war-poet has written—

> Never again shall I see them pass;
> They'll come victorious never;
> Their spears are withered all as grass,
> Their laughter's laid for ever.
>
> And where they clattered as they went
> And where their hearts were gay,
> The blackbirds sing with one consent
> In the green leaves of May.

And slowly but surely we even—wonder of wonders !—begin to feel, just a little, the pinch of war at home. It's still, of course, perfectly 'straw-

din'ry the money people go on spending on—well, things we could *easily* do without. Except just at the beginning the dressmakers, f'rinstance, have never felt the draught at all, and I notice not everyone's forswearin' spring painting and furbishing, tho' we're simply 'plored not to waste labour on mere smartness. Still, any downright *display* of dollars does get rather strafed. Must be a quite fearful hardship for some of those from the country of our newest Ally, with more money even now than they know what to do with. Even a new *very* 'spensive frock must be worn now slightly under the rose, so to speak. And to drive about too much bepearled and Rolls-Royce'd and foot-manned and furred is to run the risk of something sorcy in back-chat from the potatoless proletariat.

Such talk too 'bout Down with Dogs and other *nonsense* that I'm almost scared to take Tou-Tou and Bing into the Park these days, tho' *anyone* could *see* they were rationed, there's such a thoughtful look on their squidgy-squadgy *ducks* of flat, black faces. But of course it's the dear shining gees in the Park that really are getting it in the neck, and as for the racing ones—well, the corn shortage they say's so serious that I s'pose something 'll have to happen 'bout 'em soon, 'cos all the trainers *will* have corn, and as there aren't too many oats even for the humans . . .

And it 'll soon be a question too how anyone 'll *get* to the meetings if they do have 'em, now they're piling up the restrictions on petrol and trains get

fewer and fewer. But, of course, "wanted for business purposes" covers a multitude of—petrol for racing. F'rinstance, unending chat for months all about petrol rations, or even no petrol at all for pleasure purposes, but they were a heartening war-time sight, I give you my word, the serried ranks of cars at Gatwick and Hawthorn Hill and Windsor. All the same, even the horsy ones are getting nearer to the war world. Hounds are bein' killed off everywhere 'cos of their too healthy appetites, poor dears. And it's no longer a *dead* cert on exemption with even the sportingest tribunals to be huntsman of even the most fashionable of packs.

Oh Lord! *What* changes, what? Take only the 'xtremely democratic parties at Windsor these days. Once upon a time—and oh! *what* a difference! Only the inner circle, the racing set, the prettiest women, the sportingest men made up the Royal week-end show. Monarchs now invite to share their rations only the internationally and politically and industrially "interesting." To be smart, to be naughty, to be powerful, even to be beautiful, isn't *half* so 'portant at the Court of 1917 as to be 'specially well up in or 'specially busy on some big war matter of the moment. And to have come from an overseas dominion, like Mr. Hughes, is to be almost sure, you know, of Royal favours. They used to talk of King Edward as the most internationally useful monarch of 'em all, but King George is positively a thruster on the knittin'-up-of-Empire job, and *great*, you know, on this Education for the Masses

stunt of Mr. Fisher's that's goin' to take such a very big place in the after-the-war world.

But of *that*, the days when there'll be no more war, even Lord Curzon says we mustn't yet even begin to think. "Steel your hearts, make firm your endeavour, see the dreadful thing through," is the Curzonian mandate, and even that rose-spectacled child, Mr. Balfour, isn't stuffing up America with any glamorous ideas 'bout a speedy end now *they've* come in.

In fact, he even says *America* will have to make sacrifices. Be a fearful blow, what, after what everyone says are the most tremendously prosperous and cheery three years of the U.S.'s whole existence. To be suddenly told, even as mellifluously as dear A. J. B. tells one things, that *sacrifice* is in the offing—well, one's always heard, hasn't one, that it's not a virtue 'zacly popular with the very new daughters of Eve across the water? Whose men-folk, delightful creatures, seem to think with Mr. W. L. George (also a delightful creature, it seemeth) in his new book, "The Intelligence of Woman," that we can do no wrong: "The sons of the morning stole sunshine to make woman's hair, and Luther cut broadcloth for men; I shall never get over that."

S'nice man, isn't he? Your (this side of the water),

EVE.

May 15th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

The fighting's fierce in France, and they say it's still fiercer, the food question at home. But as to the last—well, one wonders. . . . For if there really was a shortage, and it really *was* a serious one, only lunatics would leave the solution to what they call voluntary rationing—you'd think the very babes in the wood and birds in the air must know *that's* no good, anyway.

Well, well . . . s'pose if there *is* one thing certain about life it's life's uncertainty. But about war there's this certainty, anyway—that there's always *someone* in the soup. First it was the Government; then us, 'cos they would change the fashions from fat to thin; then the night clubs and restaurants and places, 'cos the gay and giddy sub thing *would* fox-trot while Rome burned; and last, not least, that one-time sacrosanct Cæsar's-wife-above-suspicion, the Admiralty, 'pon which the rude rough breff of criticism, or even suggestion, by all the laws of the Medes and Persians must never, never, never fall.

Trouble is, of course, those beastly Germ submarines. Trespassin' in our own beloved Channel, where we used to yacht and dally so gaily and so safely, they really *are* beginnin' to make even the Englishman's dinner—that nothing in heaven or earth's ever dared to threaten yet!—look like anything but a cert. 'Fraid there'll be a few home-

truths winged Whitehall way when they sit in secret sesh on Sea-Lords, submarines, ships and the supplies-shortage at Westminster, and meanwhile there's a perfect *avalanche* of new Admirals. Idea is, I believe, to put the fighting man at H.Q. for a change. Even the mightiest mastodon of the rollin' deep mayn't set out on the loose until the Brass Hats of the "Home" Navy give the word, you see, so the man who shouts "go" 's all the better for knowin' what he's talkin' about.

'Musing, tho', isn't it, the way we *all* begin to worry once Little Mary is threatened. Everything else we're calm as kippers about, but the mere *whisper* that we might *ever* not get our four meals a day, not to speak of our 'levenses and cocktails, 'cetera, 'cetera, is too ghastly to be borne.

But why on earth don't they just tell us 'zacly what we may eat and what not and how much, and fine all offenders (double for aliens, of course) whenever anyone exceeded? To save arguments, dogs could have their tickets too for things we humans can't eat. And I think while they *are* ticketing, what, it 'd be a fine idea to make out a special sort of a badge or something to be worn by the excess-profiteers? So's we should know 'em when we saw them. For design, what of a skull and cross-bones or something tasty in that line?

For if the wild winds of dreadful war blow good to anyone it's to some of these merry millionaires who last month alone—in one short month, think of it!—were mulcted of nearly fifteen millions in taxes on their excess profits, and *then* still clung to

40 per cent. of them. To be a war-profiteer these days is *the* payingest game of 'em all. But, of course, you've got to be one of those people who aren't *too* particular and scrupulous and all that.

Talking of food, what think ye of the gay Ciro's as a Y.M.C.A. depot ? That most gorgeous, most deliciously glidey of sprung floors trodden on by the thick boots of just mere plain soldier-men instead of the *suède* and satin slippers of the fair, frail-footed butterflies of the town ! V.A.D.'s instead of the cheery Luigi. . . . Cocoa and buns in place of natives and cocktail sauce or hot lobster or *Volaille en cocotte Nivernaise,* or Pêche Melba *à la* Ciro. Instead of Sunny Jim, the expansive nigger rag-time maker with the teeth of ivory, p'r'aps a piano, p'r'aps only Tommy with his mouth organ. No more " special " ginger beer in a long goblet, no more red carpet on the grey of Orange Street, no more Cabinet Ministers hobnobbing with chorus-maids or Generals with gay girls, no more evanescent frocks from Hanover Square flitting through the big swing doors with khaki or navy blue urgent on their track. . . .

And now, Chelsea out of bounds too. Sir Frankie Lloyd's on the purifyin' job all right, isn't he ? Soon there'll positively be nothing more vicious for naughty sec or sub lieuts to do but nibble surreptitious chocs in bed, or chew a furtive loaf after the clock's struck ten. Still, one rather gathered, of course, that *these* particular revels couldn't go on *quite* for ever. It may be a new

army, but I suppose we can't let discipline and that sort of thing go quite by the board.

Yours to the last loaf,

EVE.

May 30th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

What with Russia—who isn't behaving *quite* nicely, is she ?—and those perfectly *horrid* enemy submarines, and food getting 'xpensiver and 'xpensiver, and calling up the fathers and grandfathers, and stopping racing (in parts), and the scarcity of labour, you'd *think* we'd all settle down perforce to the life contemplative, what ? But *anything* less of the kind than existence as it spreads itself to-day in London you can't imagine !

Such is the hurly-burly in the capital that hotel managers and restaurant keepers and tradesmen and the like wax fatter and fatter almost to bursting point, revelling week-end after week-end in the pleasant task of turning down—with a due portion of that insolence which is the commercial attitude in war-time—harried hankerers after house-room. Prices go up and up and up, and nothing's *less* than double what it was; but if anyone buys less because of *that*—well, they're lost in the crowd. In a word, for a " beleaguered " city, with a perfect posse of statesmen always warning it 'bout privations to come, *'strawdin'ry* how we keep our spirits up !

May be the spring, of course—you know what spring is here in England, exquisite and lovely

beyond expression . . . and the relief of it all, after the long, long war winter . . . It's Laurence Binyon, isn't it, who writes—

O summer sun, O moving trees!
O cheerful human noise, O busy glittering street!
What hour shall Fate in all the future find
Or what delights even to equal these?
Only to taste the warmth, the light, the wind!
Only to be alive, and feel that life is sweet. . . .

And it may be, of course, that we keep so uncommon cheerful because out of the multiplicity of counsels human nature, by some Divine instinct, buoyant to the end, always chooses the best—which means the pleasantest. *Par exemple*, one day we hear that there are no conclusive military reasons why the war should end for a long time; that neither we nor France are in a position to adopt the offensive; that the road that leads to victory is still long and stony; that we dare not gamble on the last throw till our last man—*and* America's—is in the field; and that, as Mr. Balfour told the States, unless liberty-lovers unite we shall be destroyed piecemeal.

But next day Mr. Lloyd George, in secret session, is confident as Cæsar, merry as a grig—even Ireland doesn't depress him. The food shortage? Why, next year we'll be self-supporting, he says, so let the U-boat do its worst. While Lord Derby declares we are *bound* to win. Anyway, we're *organising* for victory, what? Sir Eric Geddes, the new business boss at the Admiralty, is a perfect demon, they say, at the game. He organised munitions,

he organised the railways in France, he organised transport on all the fronts everywhere. And now he's to organise the Navy—which of course *did* think, and made the world think too, that it *was* organised to the last button. But *that* was before the dazzling Very light of war blazed down upon it.

Seem *quite* gone out of fashion, don't they, the "strong, silent" men who get reputations for wit and wisdom by the simple means of keeping their mouths so tightly closed that the world at large—never a *very* good judge of human nature—*leaps* to the opinion that there must be something really *very* extra special inside? The new men, being of a different school, have yet to learn that great art of the courtier and the diplomat, which is to gather up importance and *éclat* by throwing round their doings a veil of impenetrable secrecy.

Second reading of the Reform Bill in the Commons this week, and you'll know who our "serious" female politicals are if you read the list of those who are petitioning the Commissioner of Works to "scrap" that mouldy and moth-eaten wash-out, the grille in front of the Ladies' Gallery. Which they say, you know, was put there by—of all things!—a sailor-man M.P. He said he couldn't hear himself *think* with all those women staring him in the face. But the modern M.P. is more gallant—or else we've put the fear of God into 'em more thoroughly! They don't treat us in the Lords as if we were "wild beasts or inmates of a harem," as one of 'em pointed out to the Commons last week; while another, an ex-Indian Under-Sec,

confessed that when showing Indian officers round he'd always kept the Ladies' Gallery a dark secret, 'cos it did look so uncommon like as if all our talk 'bout the liberty and freedom of the *mem-sahib* and all that was just a snare and delusion. But its days of course are numbered, and in any case, shan't need a gallery to lurk in soon, shall we? I mean, the floor's as bound to follow the vote as the night the day.

Yours (very soon),
EVE, M.P.

June 10th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Even in war-time, and even in this dusty town,

Life is delight when June is come.

With a royal audacity that even the Prime Minister couldn't equal, people are fixing up *plein air* shows and buying Georgette frocks to celebrate flaming June in. As for the old weather-prophet man who swore we'd got *the* worst summer on record before us—who cares for any silly old seer when the sky is azure and the great golden sun keeps busy?

'Course no one ever *does* take any notice, anyway, of any but the *nice* prophecies, what?—the ones we *want* to come true. And 'bout the weather, 'specially in dear uncertain England, we weak humans simply bound like birds on the bough from pessimism to optimism. A few long, lovely summer days and we forget, as if they'd never been, the short dark, winter ones. A canopy of blue above us and

human hearts just can't make themselves believe that the sky 'll ever be grey again. And the same in war—a few victories and we forget all the defeats.

But that's the whole sign and symptom of war, isn't it? One lives in the moment and for it. Sufficient unto our days is the rather awful evil thereof. And how grateful we are for the good. Happiness these days marches so near to misery that when we have it we hug it tight and shut our eyes to all else in the world—past, present, or future.

News is that Mr. H. G. Wells has been to the war and wasn't altogether pleased with it—too much like a "Brock's benefit" and "not noisy enough" to make any impression, 'parently. And he's now finished his book on God and's writing about Kings—or rather how there jolly well won't *be* any more soon if they don't swallow *in toto* the day's democratic dose. And with much the same idea, the gallant Smuts General man's been saying that when the P. of W. goes a-marrying, poor child, what he *ought* to do is seek a bride in the Dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, even South Africa, he says, are worthy to provide a Queen of England.

Someone else's gone further, and suggests a bride from Fifth Avenue, but—well there, Betsy, my imagination really does boggle, what? Bobbing to the daughter of even the richest "dry goods" or "lumber" millionaire might well turn the stomach of even the most drastic of democrats. But p'r'aps, when we get as far as that, bobbing to Royals won't be done any longer, and a bright

"Hello, old thing!" will be considered as suitable to princesses as now it is to the smarter duchesses. You never can tell these days, and as a pundit has (very pundit-ly) put it, "what's wanted is to strengthen the institution of monarchy by robbing it of associations which have long been anachronistic."

Always 'muses me, tho', how visitors from democratic dominions take to our monarchical ceremonies like baby ducks to water. Americans, as everyone knows, are ready almost to *fight* for presentation at Court or tickets for the Ascot Enclosure, and Sir George Reid in his "Reminiscences" confesses that the first time he dined at Buckingham Palace and surveyed the great gold dinner service and the gorgeous candelabra he didn't "feel at all madly anxious to revert to the Federal Parliament."

Positive scream, by the way, the photographs that keep coming over of smart Americans dressed to the nines as Red Cross nurses. They don't *nurse* anything, of course, but what does that matter? Seems it's *the chic* way to get yourself up at U.S. garden-parties now, and they're lavisher even than we were at the start with those red crosses that *are* so decorative and war-timey, what? One millionairess sports a 'normous one of perfectly priceless rubies on her snowy-linened and ample breast, and there's a good deal of latitude, too, 'bout the wearin' of the veil.

Splendid idea of Lord Charlie Beresford's, wasn't it, at the Savoy the other day for brightening up a dull party—if you're bored with your neighbour or your meal, or take a sudden deep dislike to your

hostess's fixed smile, just pick up your plate, turn it gravy side downwards, and say with a loud voice, "It's a Hun!" Then you dash it on the carpet with an air of unselfish patriotism.

And if you can get all the rest of the party to do likewise, as Lord C. B. did, then you've won the game—as well, of course, as your host's gratitude (I *don't* think). Of course it was Whistler, wasn't it, who invented it? So intrigued by the willow-pattern plate they put his fish course on that he promptly turned it bottom upwards to see where it came from. And in the days when people still used tablecloths, too!

Yours, on the right side of the plate,

EVE.

June 20th, 1917.

MY DEAR BETTY,

What a June, eh? The real old-fashioned kind, when,

> . . . if ever, come perfect days,
> Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
> And over it softly her warm ear lays.

Almost *too* lovely for war-time. Gives the Huns *such* scope for their beastly air-raids for one thing, and then there's the thought of all the dear men who used to love June with us and now . . . As Wilfrid Gibson says in his beautiful lament:

> We who are left, how shall we look again
> Happily on the sun or feel the rain,
> Without remembering how they who went
> Ungrudgingly and spent
> Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings—
But we, how shall we turn to little things,
And listen to the birds and winds and streams
Made holy by their dreams,
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things ?

Sometimes, at Eton for the Fourth for instance, one nearly hated the loveliness of it all—the silver river and the great green trees and the golden fields and the blue, blue sky—because of the many who'll never glory in the whole, long, funny, serious, childish day again. It was the quietest Fourth of June there's ever been, a day of memories—very few visitors, no cricket match in the green playing-fields, no lunch in College Hall, no fireworks, and lock-up at half-past eight instead of ten. But on the great school the grey shadows of this awful war hang very very heavily. Over 800 Old Etonians have been killed since the Fourth of June, 1914—think of it! The Roll of Honour is posted on the wall of Upper Chapel—an epitome of waste and mourning! And I forget how many have been wounded, but many many hundreds have got "mentions," and no fewer than six the Victoria Cross.

It's been rather the fashion, hasn't it, to sneer a little at the "Upper Ten" and point to its fortunate members as favoured of the gods beyond all other mortals? But at least, now that the beloved country stands at the cross-roads of her fate, its men have paid as well as any other, if not most generously of all, the terrible price of Empire. And for those they have left behind, even if we have all the rest that makes life worth living, I

think it's sometimes somehow almost worse than for the poorer wives and sweethearts and mothers.

For the poor man life, alas! at best can only be one long struggle, one long giving up. And so, in some ways, to fall in battle wonderfully for one's country is not the most calamitous end to all life's little wearinesses. But for the others such wonderful heritages had been so slowly and carefully and lovingly built up. Existence was mapped out plainly, a golden path from joy to joy. Life is as sweet, of course, to one man as to another. But for these it holds more, and so the sacrifice perhaps is greater.

Quite a thrilling war-time sight, by the way, the *al fresco* investiture in Hyde Park. Guards officers, in their funny tight jackets and baggy breeches and general air of ultra-exclusive dowdiness, showed people to their seats, "and were *so* polite!" as the seated remarked, seemingly in grateful wonder. And the affair was altogether more of a friendly than a ceremonial function, so that when one particularly hearty and fervent overseas officer man went and shook the King's hand on his own initiative the afternoon threatened to turn out more like a nice party than a Royal investiture.

But in the open air, and in the democratic Park too, of all places, it's diff, of course, for even the fussiest of Royal bodyguards to keep their precious charges quite so unspotted from the world as usual. And then the Royals themselves are so much more inclined to friendliness and simplicity than stand-offishness and pomp. The Royal smile, indeed,

as the Royal hand decorates a gallant breast is a delightfully intimate and even grateful one, and there are even those who go so far as to say that if there was a bit more of this sort of thing there might be rather less of strikes and labour trouble and premature peace meetings.

All the same, *can't* help thinking seems a bit overdoing it to have dug up the famous Royal scarlet geraniums that made such a glorious spot of flaming colour in the rather arid Mall round the glittering Victoria Memorial. A place for everything and everything in its place, as the great little Victorian I am sure would have put it, and I always think that potatoes, 'bove all things, should be kept in theirs, don't you ?

Our first pukka daylight air-raid happened on the same day as the International's Private View at the Grosvenor—but there was the usual t'rrific crowd. Wonderful people, aren't we ? And all our lovely ladies in the canvases on the walls and all the fashionable painters, McEvoy and Lavery and Lambert and Orpen and Laszlo and Ranken, who's pictured Mrs. Asquith very dimly and restrainedly, the lady's famous chin-line being the only outward and visible sign of this celebrity's energy and decisiveness. Lambert seems to specialise on wonderful hands—his (in the pictures) have that rare refinement of the fourteenth-century Chinese goddesses. You know, *passionnées* and pulpy from the wrist to the knuckles, and tapered and elegant, and divinely graceful to the pointed finger-tips—in a word, the sort of hands that might

quite easily set alight the towers of Ilium and change the—er—policies of a thousand Emperors !

Yours *à la* Lambert,

EVE.

July 1*st*, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

It's not the coolest, freshest spot of all to spend a lovely June afternoon in—behind the old House of Commons grille. But, my word, it was worth it last week when one law-maker at last voted us The Vote. I mean, just to hear the dear, funny old things on the subject. . . . Such a scream !

Par exemple, Mr. William Burdett-Coutts (distinguished relict of the Victorian Banker-Baroness) spread himself on the dear, delightful, demure, modest weak-woman touch—you know, how our weakness is our strength and all that, and how it's by our soft white hands and little clinging ways that we uplift bad men and prevent our incorrigible Adams from for ever slipping back into the slough of unredeemed masculinity.

He thinks givin' us the vote 'll make women do the sinking turn—down, down, down, *where* d'you think ? Why, *to the very level of men themselves !* Isn't it orful ? And the results ? Appallin' ! Destroy, says Mr. B.-C. (and I s'pose he knows *something* of what he's talking about)—destroy the fine balance of nature that the man half has fixed up so neatly ('specially for himself—that's me, not Mr. B.-C.), and you'll do drastic injury to man and

to his attitude to women. It 'll sap the Great Moral Influence of woman over man at its very root. And, worst of all, imperil the Empire, because women, with their so sadly emotional and impressionable natures, would never let us have another war if they could help it. . . .

On much the same *silly* old lines went another crusted Tory, Sir Frederick Banbury. But his argument that the great Indian Empire would fairly totter on its foundations once it got the tip that the mere female had a voice in the Gov was nastily sat upon by Lord Robert Cecil, who wanted to know how on earth, then, they'd managed to put up with sixty years of Queen Victoria ? The Brothers Cecil, in fact, worked quite hard for the Cause, 'specially Lord Hugh, who was really quite funny about the Pink Parties and the White—the Pinks, the people who get red in the face with suppressed rage at the mere mention of Votes for Women, and the Whites, who pale at the very idea of anyone darin' to oppose them.

And after all, as he said with true Cecilian detachment, what is a Vote ? Could we really solemnly maintain that even the foolishest of women wasn't up to the very tiny mental task of voting ? Would anyone venture to say that he even felt any wear and tear when he voted ? For himself, he was prepared to do such a simple little job any time of the day or night, even if he'd got the toothache.

But I think *the* canniest attitude of all was "F. E." the Attorney-General's—wily birds these lawyers, aren't they ? What's the good of worryin',

was the gist of it. As he said, we're going to get the Vote whether he opposed it or whether he didn't —so he declared himself in favour, tho' he didn't *really* think we ought to have it! And if that doesn't show that there's absolutely no limit to our power I don't know what does. But of course all men aren't p'r'aps prepared to admit it quite so thoroughly.

The other revolution's been this business of scrapping all the German Highnesses and marking down princes to mere marquises and earls. A regular Summer Sale of Royalties—Great Reductions, Bargains in all Departments. And such a step down the road to democracy has not, needless to say, been received without some holy horror in those still alive and kicking circles where Blood-Royal is sacrosanct and immune from all earthly criticism.

Yours, unhorrified,
EVE.

July 20th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

It's all past history now, of course, and there's nothing to be done, but that worst scandal of them all, the Mesopotamian muddle, threw a cloud of depression, I think, even over those irrepressibles who, no matter what happens,

> . . . Carry on
> Their ancient pastimes, heedless of the war.

The awful thing is—whatever happens now, whatever "punishments" are inflicted, whatever high

officials retired, or whoever brought to the judgment-seat, nothing will ever bring back our men who fought with such amazing gallantry and fell in such awful, awful misery.

It's been all the talk of the town, of course, but no one, I suppose, has said a half of what there was to say. Details that couldn't bear to be spoken of were at the back of all our minds, whispers of such suffering as no human being should be called upon to hear went around. . . . But the sum total was that we've just got to grin and bear the hearing of it just as our men bore the actual horror. One point, though, stood out and added to our bitterness —that all the terror and all the suffering came about, not by the mistakes of the officers in the field, who nearly all did splendidly, but through the obstinacy and blindness and red-tapeism of the string-pullers in high places. I used to think Siegfried Sassoon's verses *too* bitter and scathing, but now . . . You remember ?

> If I were fierce and bald and short of breath,
> I'd live with scarlet Majors at the Base,
> And speed glum heroes up the line to death.
> You'd see me with my puffy, petulant face,
> Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel,
> Reading the Roll of Honour: "Poor young chap,"
> I'd say—" I used to know his father well;
> Yes, we've lost heavily in this last scrap."
> And when the war is done, and youth stone dead,
> I'd waddle safely home, and die—in bed.

For what it's worth—all London's once again ringing with end-of-the-war rumours. Date—August, 1917, which is, of course, the end of the

Kitchener three years. Your Eve tho's not putting her shirt on it. Things too good to be true do happen sometimes, of course, but in these days—not often. However, in war-time the unbelievable does come to pass, I know—witness our Vote and our new titles and the Royals' new *un*-royal ones. Talk about Russian upheavals and Greek *coups* and Spanish volcanoes and Norwegian bomb-plots. . . . All are mere bubbles 'pared with our own little bloodless *bouleversements* in loyal, law-abiding England. 'Magine, to start with, the *stride* forward it means—this titles-for-women idea alone. For men *and* women—honours easy. They've hardly gone so far even in Russia.

The fun 'll prop'ly begin, of course, when they start portioning out the G.B.E.'s and D.B.E.'s, the C.B.E.'s, the O.B.E.'s and the M.B.E.'s. Easy enough to weigh up a man's service to the nation. As a foundation there's always, of course, his income—for even the most democratic of Governments must keep the coffers full somehow. But woman's service—point is, what *sort* of service ?

F'rinstance, lately they've been telling us that havin' heaps and heaps of babies is *the* best way of all to serve one's King and Country. Will the O.B.E. be conferred on the most prolific ? Others (most of these are now in France, Italy, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Salonika, or Africa) are sure we do our little bit best of all by not forgettin' our dancing-steps, wearin' nice frocks, and generally keepin' the home fires burnin' nice and bright.

One claim to a title, someone's suggested, ought

to be if you'd never, no *never*, been photographed in full Red Cross rig, low neck, pearl necklace, white silk shoes and stockings, thoughtful expression all complete, all on the strength of one morning a week opening the door, or answering the telephone, or darning linen at an officers' hospital. Of course the *real* nurses should have the biggest claim of all. But one's afraid they won't—unless there really is going to be a reg'lar revolution in this handing out of honours. 'Magine, f'rinstance, a little insignificant V.A.D. person who'd merely been working seven hours a day seven days a week for the duration getting one, while they passed over the Important Person who "organised" mats. or lent her house for a hospital! 'Gainst *all* precedent, that, and emphatically not done, what?

As for me, I'm not sure I don't agree with that master-canteener, Lady Askwith, 'bout honours for women. As she says, when we've done everything we've still done so *very* little compared with all our fighting men have—and so many many of them get nothing. Of course for the women who've gone abroad it's another story. But just to stay safe and snug at home, even tho' you work the polish off your nails and the colour out of your eyes—well, it's something, but it doesn't kill you, and's no more than we orter do anyway.

A little story of the week's 'bout the Labour M.P. who was summoned to Buckingham Palace, and got there in the middle of that horrid daylight raid. He found the King and Lord Rosebery in the courtyard sweeping the sky with their glasses.

" ' Well !' I sez to the King, I sez," so he told the tale afterwards, " ' if one o' them bombs was to drop in this 'ere yard it 'd be a bit of orlrite, wouldn't it ?' and King George he answers, ' My Gord ! I 'ope not.' "

Almost a blessing-in-disguise, you know, for the Mesopotamian muddlers whose blood everyone was shriekin' for—the great air-raid. The culprits now are those Air Service fellows, and what we want to know—or p'r'aps I should say what the D.M. does—is, woterboutit ? It really *is*, you know, rather annoyin' sitting about and watching the beastly Hun take joy-rides over our meek heads. Solution seems to be the good old speedin'-up one. That's how we solved the shell difficulty, but the poor dear Gov'ment I see's repeatin' history in this little matter too.

" We are doin' *all* we can. Can't promise more," says Lord Derby about 'planes. So the sooner they start in from America with that hundred million pounds' worth of machines there's such a lot of talk about the better.

Yours impatiently,
EVE.

August 1*st*, 1917.

BETTY DEAR,

What fashions there are in popular war-cries, have you noticed ? How very dead, f'rinstance, is the no-new-clothes-*ever* shriek that fairly tore the clouds from the skies a year ago. Idea is, I think, that if the Gov'ment can afford to spend

eight millions of our money a day on the war it's hardly to be expected that we shouldn't keep just a pound or two back to lay out on *something* comfortin'.

For women aren't really any good without beautiful clothes—no use for any of the softer sides of life anyway, tho' course I know it's still considered *the* proof of virtue to be simply frightfully badly turned out. But even duchesses nowadays wear the right things—some of 'em anyway. And there are signs that even Royalty's coming into line with that positive pash to look nice which is as much a fetish of the twentieth century as looking perfectly horrid seems to have been of the nineteenth.

All the same, if Lord Rhondda or someone doesn't soon stop food prices soaring—well, as they say in *Cheep*,

> **We'll have to walk out wrapp't in thought—**
> **I'm glad the summer's here !**

But Lady R.'s suggestion that all non-workers should have one (at least) foodless day a week hasn't been *rushed* at at all. You see, no one 'll admit these days that they're not workers more or less, and you'd be 'mused to hear some of the things the " workers " call work. Three mornin's a week at her dresswoman's was one woman's employment, and another says that her manicurist and her hairdresser take so much out of her she's never strong enough to fast at any time.

I'm not takin' up the idea meself either, 'cos for one thing I'm always *so* cross and disagreeable,

aren't you, when I'm reely and trooly hungry. And for another, on the mornin' after the day before it wouldn't be my *words* that 'd frighten the birds, but the *norful* size of me appetite! Abstinence is so *frightfully* healthy, and I'm 'fraid that 'd be the chief result of a foodless day a week—norful relish for our meals on all the other six days. Very annoyin', but that's human nature all over, isn't it?

Seems a sort of 'nevitable natural law that if you're dreff'ly good one day you've got to be at least a *little* bad next, so's to square things. But that's, after all, what makes life so awf'ly interesting—there's nothing new under the sun but everything's always deliciously different, 'cos every single human being is himself, and no one else, a little world alone! Isn't it the "Shropshire Lad" says:

Oh, when I was in love with you,
Then I was clean and brave,
And miles around the wonder grew
How well I did behave.

And now the fancy passes by,
And nothing will remain,
And miles around they'll say that I
Am quite myself again.

Reminds me, the Gov'ment's veto on racing looks like creatin' a positive *furore* for that form of war-time amusement. Never *had* such a meetin', they say, as at the Curragh. People fairly fought for places on the boats going over—never mind if the fare *is* double, and the trains and things are wanted for the war. As to why they let 'em race

ad lib. in the Emerald Isle while here we're rationed, the story is, you know, that the Irish members said that if the Gov'ment *dared* to stop their racing they'd *combine* and with one voice vote against 'em every time, no matter what the trouble was. Result's racing as usual. Shows you must take a firm hand with Governments, doesn't it ?

A sort of summer feeling is rather creepin' over us. A way it has, even in war-time, I find, when

> The bee is on the heather,
> And the sun is on the ben.

They say all the seaside places are chock-a-block already, and though London in autumn in war-time's a very different proposish from what it used to be, there's always a sort of hankering, when the summer gets a pace on it, to leave behind the noise and dust and grey and stuffiness of the town and wake in the morning

> Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
> Six foot out of the turf,
> And the harebell shakes on the windy hill
> On the breath of the distant surf.

Yours hankeringly,
EVE.

August 15th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Fittin' way to celebrate the third anniversary of this horrid war, isn't it—settin' up this new War Aims Committée ? For committees, you know, are *the* war craze, in what someone's called a Country of Committees. Dozens of 'em, there are, and

what no one knows is what they do or even what they want to do. Object of this last I'm told is (1) to keep before the nation the causes of the war, (2) to impress upon it that we've got to carry on till we beat the hateful Hun.

Funny things, men—aren't they ? All ostriches, the whole sex of 'em, as they say in one of the plays. Why appoint a committee to tell people what they've known all along and anyway can read in the paper every day ? But then, Ministers never read the papers, of course—or hardly ever. Tho' evidently someone's told 'em there are such things, 'cos whenever anything goes wrong, or rather gets found out, they 'mediately go hell-for-leather for the scandalous and disgraceful Press.

Boon and a blessing to men, not to speak of women, *I* call the papers. Think how dull life 'd be without 'em, and as for breakfast—almost rather do without my tea and toast than my *Times* and the rest, wouldn't you ? And I'm told that in families where they don't stint the supply—of papers, I mean—they've been the literal saving of the communal breakfast. Not of course that me and Tou-Tou and Bing has ever attended such a function. We're always *so* tired in the mornings—and thirsty. One-woman-one-teapot's my motter, same as Tou-Tou's is one-dog-one-bone.

The holiday month. . . . But no holiday mood to keep it in. Also-rans, everyone of them, the delightful outdoor things we used to do

> . . . before the world was out of gear
> When life swerved not from its appointed channel,

in the time of the year that had Cowes in it, Goodwood, charmingest of race-meetings, the Twelfth, and Scotland, Deauville, Le Touquet, and the Bads. Now, as the war Augusts keep on keeping on, one remembers always that dreadful one three years ago when the world went to war and everything changed and our men all marched away, some of them never to come home again.

I sometimes think, you know, we're a little likely to forget, in our admiration for our wonderful new army, the impayable debt we owe to the old one, to the little B.E.F. that bluffed the Hun time after time and, as someone's just written,

> Barred the road with its body, holding on day after day, with no reserves and almost no guns, against the vastly outnumbering masses flung against it. . . . It stemmed the tide; it gave Great Britain time; its devotion was imperishable; its fame eternal. . . .

And we mustn't forget either that, as the same writer says, the remnant of the old army has evolved the new. "Those of them who live to-day—and how few they are—begin to reap the fruits of their labour; at their feet the glory lies like a wreath offered to their fallen brothers." I think he, too, lies now on the fields of France, the poet soldier-man who wrote—

> Ye sleepers, who will sing you ?
> We can but give our tears,
> Ye dead men, who shall bring you
> Fame in the coming years ?
> Brave souls . . . but who remembers
> The flame that fired your embers ? . . .
> Deep, deep the sleep that holds you
> Who one time had no peers.

London in these war-time Augusts isn't any longer "empty," but it's still dusty. The green in the Park's turned a dingy brown, Bond Street's a desert, women tend to serge and tweediness, everyone's seen everything—positively the only bright spots are the Army's new evening dress clothes of lovely peace-time-y dark blue and red braid and brass buttons.

Last word in smartness they are, and the highness and tightness of the collars is yet another proof how even for men *il faut souffrir pour être beau.* As I've remarked before 'bout fifty million times, 'musin' things men, what? Always ravin' 'bout our high heels and flimsy frocks and flimsier undies, and go off the rails themselves *just* as badly—in another direction. Women take off clothes to be beautiful. Men put 'em on. And if there's anything to choose between the two—well, we're much nearer the classic, anyway, aren't we?

Talkin' of the classics, the collectin' crowd's been enjoyin' itself at Christie's for the sale of the priceless Hope heirlooms. Heard America, which was present in force, was very keen on acquirin' the famous statue of Athene in Carrara marble—a Phidian masterpiece that weighs three tons, no less! But one of our own merchant princes, Lord Cowdray, snatched her first. Must confess she left me just the littlest bit *cold.* A bit overdressed for my money. But that, of course, wouldn't have gone against her in the land where Shakespeare *and* the Bible are thoroughly expurgated before taken, and where the oh! so sporty heroines of even

the newer fiction are the kind of "harrowing dolls" that infuriate Mr. Arnold Bennett so much in the immortal works of Mrs. Humphry Ward:

> Oh, those cultured conversations! Oh, those pure English maids! That skittishness! That impulsiveness! That noxious winsomeness!

What a sad scourger of our social idiosyncrasies is the discoverer of the "Five Towns." In "Books and Persons" he pours the vials of his deepest scorn on that most fash of names, Diana:

> In literature all girls named Diana are insupportable. Look at Diana Vernon. What a creature! Imagine living with her. You can't! Look at Diana of the Crossways. Why did Diana of the Crossways marry? Nobody can say—unless the answer is that she was a ridiculous ninny. . . .

And I rather like him, too, on another of our fashions—the one for Memoirs "often scandalous, for the most part scandalous sexually":

> The caprice for grape-nut history and memoirs cannot endure, for it is partially a pose. Besides, the material will run short. After all, Napoleon only had 103 mistresses. . . .

But I think he exaggerates the danger of any shortage in *that* sort of material, what?

Yours reminiscently,
EVE.

September 1st, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Great event! Arrival of the first American soldiers in London. We saw them from the Ritz, and lor'! my child, but they did contrast, you know,

with the Guardees who hustled 'em round! To start with, you see, its simply fearf'ly severely practical, the 'Merican uniform—officers and men alike go guiltless of brown leather or brass buttons, and the slouch hats aren't somehow so sorcy as the 'Stralians' variety of same. And then their seriousness—after the irrepressible *joie de vivre* of our poor fighting boys quite a change. P'r'aps it was 'cos they'd dragged the poor dears so early from their bysies—hadn't had their sleep out.

Hardly think it could have been what someone said—that they were undone, overawed, frit, dazzled, petrified, scared, bewildered, stupefied, dumbfounded, *staggered*, by the gallant Guardees who were sandwiched in amongst them. All the same, it *was* rather like the lily and the violet side by side to see a smart, gold-peaked, besworded Grenadier or Coldstream officer marching rigid as a phalanx of pokers between two slouch-hatted ones of the very newest army, who *would* mar the sacred solemnity of the occasion by going so far as actually to *chat*.

And talkin' of the Army, hasn't Lord Charley B. been lettin' himself go some 'bout Winston and his new appointment? H.S. for a hot summer afternoon it was, 'specially when Winston 'gan answering back 'bout parrot cries from "people whose brains are smaller than those of the smallest parroquet."

Still, even the most irrepressible of our politicians hasn't come to smacks yet, like the almost equally inextinguishable Mr. Pemberton Billing and his

hon. and gallant friend, Colonel Archer Shee. Their little scrap in Palace Yard vastly intrigued M.P.'s, who have awful little amusement these days, poor dears, now the Nationalists have got so respectable —not enough spirit left even to call people dirty spalpeens and things, much less rise to stand-up fights like they used to. S'pose they feel nothing they can do's likely to make a good splash now the Sinn Feiners have got going.

Autumn's rolled in—p'r'aps to make us pay for our glorious summer—so horribly early this year that we've really been feelin' more like lingerin' over the port-and-walnuts or some other warming and tranquillising potion than sitting out on the balcony in chiffon, watchin' the falling stars or counting the blinking searchlights. Up in the north and far west and places I'm told it's been the freezing limit already, and tweeds are " it " *any* farther out than Maidenhead, where, of course, people are garbed more accordin' to the salaries they've been drawin' than the way the season's drawing in.

And talkin' of those parts where our naval bases are, isn't it positively nerve-racking the once-a-week or oftener upheavals where once nothing was ever changed from one year to another ? Thrilling, the way men dot from job to job these days. Anyway no chance of getting stale when you can quite easily be a General one day, an Admiral the next—and the day after that one of H.M.'s Ministers. Nowadays, you see,

> The game is more than the playin' of the game,
> And the ship is more than the crew.

And you don't, with luck, even have to dine your way into the Cabinet, like a Soarer in one of the new books whose "dinners were always so excellent, and who didn't give cheap champagne even to Labour members."

Yours tweedily,
EVE.

DEAREST BETTY, *September 15th*, 1917.

Very wearin' these raid times. . . . Sittin' up half the night listening to the Gothas humming isn't the best thing for nerves, and the poor dear old Archies make plenty of noise if they don't make a habit of hitting the bull's-eye. In fact, spite of all those *'strawdin'ry* cheery optimist people who keep on telling us we've won the war, I don't mind 'fessing that what with raids here and horrid casualty lists from over there it hasn't felt a *bit* like it. But of course the chewed-string feeling aforesaid does incline you to take a slightly gloomsome view of life, and we truly aren't quite our brightest, breeziest selves just the moment.

The aeroplane nights have knocked a nail into the head of yet another of our old-time possessions—in this Bellonic year of 1917 would even the head-in-air Keats, I wonder, have the "guts" to write sonnets to that chaste Diana whose beauty haunts us "heart and soul"? His

> . . . loveliest moon, that even silvered o'er
> A spell for Neptune's goblet; she did soar
> So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
> Commingling with her argent spheres did roll
> Through clear and cloudy . . .

is in disgrace these days!

Nice times these, aren't they, for that superior episcopal pacifist person, the Lord Bishop of Carlisle, to shriek "No reprisals, no retaliation, no babies for babies"? And Mrs. Creighton, archiepiscopal widow, who's going about lecturing in garden cities and places how we really must *not*, 'specially as women, be too unkind to Germany or the German. As soon as poss, indeed, we're to buy our food and stuff from him again, so's to promote general good-will and let bygones be bygones and all that sort of gump. Really, you know, *is* there a war on? And *why* are these people allowed, when everyone knows that what we really want is lots more *hate*, not lots more brotherly love? Anyway, Tou-Tou and Bing reaffirm their resolve to bite any Boche blighter they ever fall on, to the bone, at sight. And I am, as ever, full to the brim with righteous Hun-hate.

Reminds me, me and Tou-Tou and Bing are invited out to Palestine by an R.H.A. Major man who says: "You've been writing of a lovely June, dear Eve—you can't imagine how we long for the sight and smell of an English rose again. Two years of Egypt and Palestine make one home-sick, I can tell you, and the eternal glare of the sun and pests of flies are hard to endure."

How nice it would be if you and Tou-Tou and Bing would come and visit us. We'd show you all the sights—Gaza and Ali Munta, where Samson carried the gates. And Beersheba, the scene of Esau's little effort, and where Delilah lived and loved—and betrayed—her Samson. My guns are trained almost on the very spot where the lady is pushing up the daisies—or what corresponds to daisies in this perishing land. . . .

Sounds temptin', doesn't it, if hottish? Not that I'd mind that, after this lovely warm summer, tho' I s'pose summer here is not much hotter than winter is in all those far-away horrid Eastern battlefields where our men hunger so sometimes for this England of ours that is

> . . . so very small and very green,
> And full of little lanes all dense with flowers
> That wind along and lose themselves between
> Mossed farms, and parks, and fields of quiet sheep. . . .

But I'm 'fraid those silly old 'thorities people are very "off" women goin' East, what? A pity, 'cos I know Tou-Tou for one 'd simply *love* himself in a little pith helmet, some nice short shorts, and a small pair, two pairs, of pale lemon-coloured silk puttees of the extra doggy order. Rather 'fraid, too, Delilah's bones 'd be a bit of an overpowerin' temptation to the poor darling. Guess there'd be *some* excavatin' expeditions 'mong those Old Testament ruins, what?

By the way, 'cos of the *dreadful* way Russia's letting us down *and* the fall of Riga—nasty blow that for even the most unshakable optimists—I've rechristened the dear old dogs again this week. 'Stead of Tou-Toupoff and Bingobitch, the dear things are now, by Royal Letters Patent, Chas. J. Tou-Tou and Maisie P. Bing, with the accent 'Merican style on the middle initial. Really thought someone ought to do something, and why they've been transformed into little Transatlantic bow-wows is naturally 'cos of America sittin' up and behavin' so nicely. Men, money, aeroplanes—unending chat

'bout how they're soon goin' to send 'em over in bunches, and the old Wilson man is fairly slitherin' through Congress, or whatever they call it, all sorts of real cute laws and things to try and do down profiteering and shirking and graft and other little war-time troubles.

Lovingly (as they'd put it in the U.S.),

EVE.

September 30th, 1917.

BELOVED BETTY,

A battle-fighter (to be) from the country of our newest Allies now training somewhere on the East Coast writes to complain of the English (1) Complexion, (2) Camisole. "We had a duchess presenting prizes at the regimental sports, and apart from being anything but stunning she, like other ladies present, *had a shiny nose!* Say, Eve, don't you English girls use powder? Another thing, where are all those other adorable cute 'uns which all our girls wear? Haven't seen anything dainty under a shirt-waist since being in England. No, I'm not a vicious vulgar man, but we are trained to admire the beauty which our women cultivate in a real artistic manner."

Norful, isn't it, that we should give the U.S.A. such norrible shocks? But then, you know, the East Coast in autumn. . . . Really can't do much in the way of "cute 'uns" when the wind blows nor'-nor'-east and the rain wumps down and the chilly grey waves dash sullenly on the foreshore of —— or ——. Even if you do wear 'em and

risk pneumonia you've got to camouflage them under such a collection of tweeds and woollies and Burberrys and things a man 'd have to have second sight or something to discover 'em.

But I agree a duchess with a shiny nose *is* enough to give the blue glooms to any right-thinking young thing from America. *We're* so used to 'em, you see, and when *he* gets to know us better he'll learn, too, not to judge us by our duchesses—for one thing, such lots of 'em hail from his (and God's) own country.

All the same, p'r'aps we are more addicted to freckles and things than the marble-skinned *houris* and pallid peaches of the West—that's the price you pay for a complexion that doesn't look like tired-out leather before you're forty! As to the powder question—'course I 'tirely agree about *that*, tho' p'r'aps it would be considered a bit advanced if our duchesses started pattin' and dabbin' away at their noses just like the most ord'n'ry of flappers and chorus-girls. But that's another thing our American will soon tumble to—that it's a positive pose with our Very Best people to be as dowdy as they can, just like it is for dukes to wear the worst hats and trousers in the world, and queens "sensible" black-leather boots on 'casions when you and I tread the globe in sating slippers and things.

Talkin' of queens, "this war," says a Chinaman in Mr. H. G. Wells's very latest, "The Soul of a Bishop," which I've just been skilfully skimming, "will end in a great harvesting of Kings." But I think they won't harvest 'em quite all, what?

And prob'ly, 'mongst the keeps, there'll remain H.M. King George V., whose tour up in Scotland last week was the last word in contrasts between Royal ways in peace-time and in war.

Cast back your mind, *par exemple*, to our last Edwardian autumn, when, tho' the horrid Hun was deeply 'mersed in war preparations, we'd pos'tively almost forgotten there was such a thing in the wild rush to improve on the deadly dulness of the reign before. Scotland, of course, was the autumn Mecca and, led by the Court, Society did the round of it, from house-party to house-party, moor to moor, meeting to meeting. Railways existed only to carry us to this shoot or that one.

Last week H.M. went to Scotland too—but my word, what a difference was there! No telegrams giving a waiting world news of the Royal bag, but instead, frightfully war-like descriptions of how many new devices for killing off Germans H.M. had inspected, and in place of lists of houses visited and guests entertained and shoots shot over, the Royal dining and sleeping was done in the train to save time. Such is war. Interferes quite dreadfully, doesn't it, with the amusing side of life?

Doin' our best, of course, to keep our end up—even the old Gothas every night haven't kept us from the opera, and *Ivan the Terrible* and *Boris Godounov* and *Mariage de Figaro* and the rest went bravely on, tho' sometimes you could hardly hear the Drury Lane music for the more martial kind that clanged from the heavens outside. S'pose we've sort of got used to war, it's becoming a bit of a habit,

and of course, as people return to town, there are the same old rumours flyin' about—I've heard 'em every autumn since 1914—'bout the war ending by Christmas.

But we don't bother to believe 'em, and meantime the War Savings Committee's starting out on a stupendous winter 'conomy campaign. Eat less *and* spend less we must *or*—well, conscription of wealth's the *least* of the evils offered us, and *I* can't think of a worse one. Fancy everyone having 'zacly the same income as everyone else! For one thing, how dull! And for another, how *should* we poor weak wimmin ever decide on whom to bestow in holy mat. our little fluttering hands?

Reminds me, a reg'lar *rash* broken out in the papers on the relations of the sexes as the result of the Malcolm case. What's *most* amused people's the delicious masculine idea that we females must be "protected." If not—well, you know what happens. The *Worst!* 'Musing return to medievalism, isn't it?

Another delightfully masculine idea well to the fore in this *crime passionel* business—that man is the "keeper" of woman's "honour." As if woman wasn't quite capable of keeping anything she wanted to keep, however "mysteriously intertwisted her emotional and nervous system." Indeed, most people agree that if anyone wants "protection" it isn't woman, but man!

Still, now that 'ficial sanction's been given to the business, rather afraid there'll be a norful lot of pistolling, what, when they all come rolling home?

Let's hope a more live-and-let-live idea will come into fashion by then. That's the course that's turned out best when war widows have been too hasty to taste again the joys of matrimony and missing "firsts" have Enoch-Ardened into life again.

Meantime, in these war-time days, I read my Samuel Butler to this effect:

> When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness that he hath committed and doeth that which is neither quite lawful nor quite right, he will generally be found to have gained in amiability what he has lost in holiness. . . .

For man read woman, and you'll grasp my point. The price of the virtuous woman may be above rubies, but I've often noticed, haven't you, how much more amiable is she who doesn't make a fetish of it?

Yours openmindedly,
EVE.

October 15*th*, 1917.

MY DEAR BETTY,

Thank goodness there's only one Harvest Moon, for strewth, my Betty, but we pos'tively got fed up with this one! Night after night the red-faced old thing blazed in the sky, and night after night the Hun blighters came along, givin' a bigger show every time, till we almost grew 'customed to it, sort of felt lonely without 'em—the Hun always *does* overdo things. No sense of proportion.

But they made of nearly a week's dinners the most movable feasts I've ever feasted at. One dressed

to the warnings (when the wise took a cocktail—a Soul's Ruin by choice, and preferably in a tumbler), and dashed down soup and sherry to a distant "boom! boom!" And the *poisson* congealed on our plates the while a bigger one drove us for a space to the nether regions.

A short silence—it's the silentest silence you can imagine, the strange hush of noisy London between gun-fire—and hunger enticed one upstairs for the cutlets and claret. But that was a bit of a gobble, and the pudding (if any) and nuts, port and coffee sank—as Gothas buzzed, star shells sizzled, shrapnel shrapped, bombs banged and guns gunned—to a series of sudden snacks imbibed more to sustain wobbly human interiors than as the usual sacramental end-of-dinner ritual.

As for your Eve—well, I confess I *did* cut just a few restaurant and theatre shows. It really is just a teeny weeny bit beyond me—the sort of mentality or doggedness or carry-on-if-the-heavens-fall-ness, or whatever it is, of those 'stonishing people who really did every night, right in the middle of it all, go about just 'zacly as if everything was quite ordinary. I don't mind so much bein' done in *at home*. What I should hate would be if the horrid Hun got me 'mongst a crowd of *other* people I didn't know and didn't want to. So much nicer to set off for heaven from your own starting-post, so to speak, where Tou-Tou and Bing could do the faithful hound touch and you wouldn't have to remember to tip the waiter.

'Course *the* sight of sights here in London in raid

week, they say, was the 'pallin' way our *dear* alien pop comported itself in the Tube stations. Fought and kicked and scratched for the safest places, and when they were packed so tight there was no moving backwards *or* forwards, the strongest young men (all of military age, of course) won their way to safer places still by the simple process of walking on the heads of their seething compatriots. There was a sweet touch too, I am told, when some brave lads, true to the national instinct, emptied every slot machine and sold the contents at *enormous* profits to the less far-sighted. . . . And our nice clean special constable men had the pleasin' job of shepherding these useful citizens and seeing that they came to no harm! 'Musing people, aren't we?

But it's been an unforgettable experience. Exquisite autumn days, all brown and red and gold and deep purple, that merge in a glow of glory into marvellous moonlight nights, windless, cloudless, royally blue, with not a whisper of chill and glamorous beyond words. And into this fairyland suddenly—battle of the deadliest. . . . Truly we live dangerously these days. And it's the only way *to* live, of course, tho' peace is what we're all longing for most of all—not because here at home we can't stick it any longer, but because the losses and the griefs and the hurts of our men and this sacrifice of youth are getting almost beyond bearing.

Your war-sated
EVE.

October 20th, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

Whether they ration us or whether they don't, it's really beginning to look like as if all that 'll soon be left to the truly patriotic is to gnaw a bone or worry a biscuit—tho' even the biscuit idea's a dwindling one. There's a limit, after all, even to what multis can pay for their sugar and their marmer and their bacon and their tea, what? I mean, I s'pose you really can't go on *forever* doubling and redoubling and overdoubling all the prices of everything.

However . . . it's a long lane, etc., of course, and p'r'aps there'll come a time when even the gorged profiteer 'll get fed up with profiting. Or, tho' that's p'r'aps only a beautiful dream, the Government *might* stop 'em, or the people rise up and gouge their horrid eyes out. As sayeth G. K. Chesterton of the *genus* grocer—

> He sells us sands of Araby
> As sugar for cash down;
> He sweeps his shop and sells the dust,
> "The purest salt in town."
>
> He crams with cans of poisoned meat
> Poor subjects of the King,
> And when they die by thousands,
> Why, he laughs like anything.

One of our autumn treats is—a New Party. Did I tell you—the National? And General Page-Croft fathers the babe. The old political ideas, say the reformers, are not merely inadequate,

they're positive *obstacles* under our new conditions. And the poor dear old party system gets some nasty knocks. F'rinstance, that for years it's been only "an organised mockery of the true spirit of the nation," and that if we are to win the war we *must* free ourselves "somehow or other from the clutches of this octopus." Well, here's luck to it, I'm sure. But if it's really going to do all it says . . . Talk about the Augean stables. . . .

And on the subject of reformers, Lady Sarah Wilson's been *enragin'* the dressmaker people with a letter to the papers 'bout all the frock-shows they've been treating us to. *Is* there a war? she asks, as others before her, and describes in this fourth autumn of it the scene at her dressmaker's. Outside, strings of private motor-cars, from the large limousine to the modest two-seater you buzz about in by yourself. Inside, serried rows of closely packed femininity all round the spacious "salons," all waiting breathlessly to see processions of gorgeously attired young women touring the rooms clad in embroideries so rich, satins so gleaming, velvets so soft, ninon so gauzy, furs so lovely, that they dazzled even the disapproving eyes of a shocked Lady Sarah.

Seems, doesn't it, as if women must be clothed if the heavens fall—or anyway whatever happens 'bout the war? But once again—what an amazing nation! All the time lurid stories 'bout the lack of labour and the drain on men and no petrol and no service and the fearful diff of getting even *war* things done—yet all the frills of life are all there all the same.

Even the pictures—after I've been to a picture show, like the International at the Grosvenor, I always wonder more and more whether there really can be fighting anywhere. Painting lovely ladies and things is of course most awf'ly important work. But whether it helps to win the war . . . S'pose, tho', it's something if it makes you laugh and intrigues you—as the Epstein ones do at the Leicester. Seems to me, you know, it's really better *not* to be pretty if the Epstein sculps you. 'Cos when he's finished with you, you've simply got to come out so much character that positively there's no *room* for merely lookin' nice.

But there . . . after all, what does *anything* matter s' long as you're in the movement? I've even thought sometimes of offering up Tou-Tou as a model on the altar of the Epstein craze, poor darling. Only I'm *so* afraid he mightn't recognise in the master's rough-hewn mass his beautiful, slim, long-eared, snub-nosed, bow-legged, fluffy-tailed dragon-dog self—and go up and bite it or something, thinkin' it a new kind of war-bone. *So* difficult to develop the proper feeling for Art in even the most priceless and pedigreed and swishest of Pekingese.

Yours, twixt art and war,
EVE.

November 19th, 1917.

BETTY DEAREST,

When this ruddy war is over
Oh, how happy we shall be.

But will it ever be? And oh! really I shall weep I shall, and do all *sorts* of salt-tear things if I get any more letters from all our many fronts sayin' how worried the men are 'bout us and the air-raids. As if they mattered! Indeed, when *nothing* happens and it all goes on so easily and gaily I feel *much* worse. I feel like the writer-man who tries to describe a battalion that passed him returning from the fight at Bapaume:

They had done their trick in the trenches,
They were coated and caked in mud,
And some of them wore a bandage,
And some of them wore their blood.

The gaps in their ranks were many,
And none of them looked at me . . .
And I thought of no more vain phrases
For the things I was there to see.
But I felt like a man in a prison van
Where the rest of the world goes free.

By the way, fearf'ly carpy carpings at Westminster at the Air-Powers-That-Be 'cos of people being startled by too much barrage, or worried 'cos of not enough, or not being warned loudly enough, or else woke out of their best sleep by busy Boy Scouts too brazenly bugling "Take Cover" or "All Clear." And the Rulers of the King's Navee also been gettin' it in the neck over what

happened in the North Sea—and didn't in the Baltic.

But the New First Lord, Sir Eric Geddes, is one of those *calm* customers, and cool as custard simply doesn't describe his *suaviter in modo* at Westminster to a House all of a flap for naval mems last week. Indeed, I gathered some people who've been strafing the Navy seemed to think someone ought to give him the Aluminium Cross for Audacity, so 'musingly unconscious seemed Sir E. that the Navy *could* do wrong or that quite a lot of people were really quite cross with it.

Reminds me, as a sort of set-off to those poor lambs of optimists who prophesied the war Over-by-Christmas and All-but-Won and all the rest of it, we're now rather putting the tin hat on it in the *other* direction. Pessimism's the fashion—tempered of course by the fixed belief that things *must* come right in the end. And as to when the war 'll be over —Starr Wood's picture in "Printer's Pie" of the soldier in a trench at the Front whose pal asks about his daughter "wot was born just after you came out" best reflects our attitude. "Oh, she's married now," the soldier replies, "her son's just joined an O.T.C."

Meanwhile, by all the signs, there's a *real* war winter at *last* in front of us. To start with, rations—because of course it will be rations. Gruesome thought, tho', isn't it, that we have got to pool our food with our Allies?

After rations—the big new comb-out. Ten thousand men wanted for aeroplanes, Admiralty

and munitions; hundreds of thousands more soldiers; ten thousand Waacs; thousands of factory hands; thousands of (female) farm hands. 'Nuff to wet-blanket the freshest spirits, isn't it?

But as for the women part, *what* a pity they don't conscript us and be done with it. S'pose the trouble is they aren't worth having when you *do* get 'em—the ones who wait till they're pushed. And, of course, there's a goodish few "workers" whose work can't truthfully be said to be helpin' fearf'ly with the war, what?

The multitude of chorus ladies, f'rinstance. . . . 'Fraid they'd simply *hate* bein' clerks or typists or cooks or anything *useful* like that. And of course the baby Sec.-Lieuts., dear things,

> With the milk on their mouths
> And the time on their wrists,

would miss them something *terrible*. But there is a war on, and even bein' a stage-lady won't prevent people knowin' about it soon.

Then the noble army of *mannequins*. . . . At a pinch p'r'aps we *could* manage just for the duration to buy our clothes *not* off a human peg, so to speak. They'd make perfectly good waitresses—to look at, anyway. Into the array of war-workers conscription might also gently rope, say, a million or so drapery young ladies without anyone feelin' any draught, and lots of Mayfairites I'm sure 'd scrub *much* better than they dance or recite or pose in charity *tableaux*. The upbringing of the "Best" modern young woman in these days is such that what

with muscle and "beef" and fearful healthiness, and all the rest of it, she positively requires pretty stiff exercise if only to let the steam off.

Yours, all for it,
EVE.

November 30*th*, 1917.

BEST OF BETLETS,

The great old war goes on and on, and you'd never believe how busy it keeps us. Take this very week as ever was, f'rinstance. A reg'lar crowd of shows—good thing the old Controller man, whoever he now is, hasn't rationed drinks, what? I mean, after stall-holding or tableau-posing from lunch to dinner you feel like nothing on earth so much as tellin' 'em "to bring the happy water in tanks and let them play the hose on one," as the 'Merican flying man put it. Also picture shows in *dozens*, and if there *is* anything more exhaustin'—let me know about it!

And to take our minds off war and winter there's a big flap on amongst the more modern moderns all about our "absurdly obsolete" marriage laws. In those circles where they let these little matters keep 'em awake o' nights, a fixed intention obtains to

> Grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
> Shatter it to bits—and then
> Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire.

Their spokesmen, upholders, leaders, and what not include, amongst other celebrities, Lords Sydenham, Lytton, Grenfell and Buckmaster, H. G. Wells and

Lady Frances Balfour, and they've got a slap-up reform Bill ready for old Parliament—when Parl is ready for the Bill.

Been a perfectly fearful buzz, of course, over the let-us-peace petition of Lord Lansdowne. People fairly foamed with fury, and even the old gentleman's warmest admirers couldn't deny that, this bein' nothing if not a young man's war, we don't want well-meaning old things of over seventy summers butting untimely in, the while the valour of our generation is paying for the folly of theirs. But it all goes to prove, doesn't it, that even in these democratic days it's still nice to be Marquess of Lansdowne, Baron of Kerry and Lixnaw, Baron of Keith, Nairne and Dunkerron, Viscount Clan Maurice, Fitzmaurice and Calne, and Earl of Shelburne and Wycombe—which are just a few of the Lansdowne names and titles. I mean, if a mere Mr. Smith, Jones or Brown had tried to insert such sentiments even in the hospitablest newspaper, I can see the W.P.B., and pretty dam quick too, *his* very sure and certain fate, what ?

However—s' long as somebody loves you . . . and they say they're talkin' of the old thing in Berlin as England's only sensible man. S'pose, tho', it *is* a little annoying to realise that the days when you and your kind were lords of all they surveyed, the top dogs of the universe, have gone never to return. Prolongation of the war will spell ruin for the civilised world, he says. But what he really means, of course, is that *his* world is toppling about his ears and his children and their children, and

it 'll be a very different one from the soft and cushy one it's been to him.

As Mr. Charles Hawtrey would say—Well, well, well, well. . . . After all, a sardine's a very nice change after too much sole and salmon, and it really would be the limit, the outside edge, beyond the horizon, if we went and made a too-early peace, betraying our men and wiping out all their sacrifices just because the longer we go on the poorer we'll be.

> Naught shall make us rue
> If England to herself remain but true;

and the truth is, I suppose, riches won't be so very much good after the war, anyway. Someone's got to pay the piper, and in any case, as they say in one of the new plays, family trees and that sort of thing are played out. The man who's top dog to-day—and more so to-morrow—is the man who can *do* things. And if we are all broke to the wide—ah, well, what does *anything* matter if only we keep free

> . . . this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm,
> This England ?

If even Shakespeare felt like that about it how must we feel who are giving up for England England's most priceless possession—her splendid youth ?

'Course we still have our young women—and they, as I have told you, are making London fairly buzz with fashionable charity shows 'tween this and Christmas. Between the Albert Hall and the Savoy this week the—er—war-workers positively palpitate,

and who isn't at one is at the other, and everyone so busy doing things that really if it weren't for the despised but useful "mob" (as a certain fashionable young woman of fearf'ly boring notoriety invariably designates all who are not "One of us"), I don't know who'd have done the paying and the staring. And, of course, better a "mob" to stare than no one, what? No earthly good gettin' yourself up at vast expense as, say, "Tommy's Dream of Blighty," or "A Persian Miniature," or "A Missal," or anything chaste like that, with none of the *hoi polloi* there to admire the effect, is it?

Yours unpeacefully,
EVE.

December 15*th*, 1917.

DEAREST BETTY,

A Christmas feelin's already in the air—and it's not *all* War Loan people seem to be buying in Bond Street. Must celebrate the takin' of

Jerusalem the Golden,

you see, and 'sides—just about *the* fixedest, most immovable, deepest-rooted of all our cherished traditions and things, good old Christmas, what? But all the same, even the Christmas idea in this the fourth year of the world at war is starting to wear uncommon thin.

Peace-on-earth-and-mercy-mild—rather a dud stunt, what? 'Cept, of course, to what someone calls the *vieillards stupides et séniles qui ont perdu le controle d'eux-mêmes*. In Flanders, the fight for

Cambrai more bitter and terrible than any of all the fighting of all these dreadful years; in Italy we and our Allies locked in a deadly struggle; farther East, our dear darling gallant new Crusaders laying siege to (and when they're in 'em cleaning up) the old, old, dirt-encrusted, smell-haunted Bible towns; the under-sea war going stronger than ever; and on the Russian front a sinister fraternising between Hun and Slav that bodes we hardly dare to think *what* for England.

In this war world Christmas is such a shadowed festival, the New Year a tragic gamble. And the old, old wishes are like the old, old ways—strange and meaningless and sometimes cruel, and always sad. Oh dear! Ah, well. . . . And anyway we're not, of course, downhearted, tho' I'm afraid it 'll be a case of

> Stay me with flagons,
> Comfort me with apples
> For I am sick of . . . war—

for not only *this* Eve this Christmas. Leave's as rare as butter, and of course they *would* go and fix it so there's only one thing there's a glut of—and that's mistletoe! No turkey (it's a profiteer's dish only this year—'bout 15s. a pound or something), no Christmas pudding, no sugar, no spice, nothing that's s'nice—really, what's the good of *anything?*

Seriously tho', Best Belovedest, the times *are* too out of joint, aren't they, for all but the merest mockery of the old carousings and rejoicings? On our shoulders, says Winston, "for another year at least the main weight and burden of the war must

lie. . . ." Only the blind and heartless could fail to be appalled by the prospect. For war's no longer even a bit of a game, or a rag, is it? Only the dreariest, dingiest, most devilish business that ever happened. For the battle-fighters, perhaps,

> Of all their brave adventures
> This the last
> The bravest is and best.

But for us at home, on every day that passes,

> . . . Solitude walks
> One heavy step more near.

And that's the worst of war, *this* kind of war—it's so immense, so overwhelming, its grimy streams so far-reaching that it drowns in its flood all the other things, all the other interests that used to be so sweet and satisfying. One fills up one's time with work or with play, but at the back of it all there's always the war. . . . Trickling through every thought, and every word, and every deed, there's that dark river of war that's caught us all on its tide—good and bad, young and old, clever and stupid, rich and poor.

Even the thought of peace is almost bitter because, as Maurice Baring wrote in memory of Lord Lucas,

> When the spring of the world shall shrive our stain
> After the winter of war,
> When the poor world wakes to peace once more
> After such night of ravage and rain,
> You shall not come again.

I forget who it was talked about the feeling that to-morrow is going to be splendid. How some people

keep it for ever—and to lose it, that is age. . . . But it must have been written before the war, for our task now is to keep at arm's length, if we can, the feeling that to-morrow may be—dreadful. And to try to remember, too, that perhaps, after all,

Nothing is here for tears,

in the holocaust of our youth that's saddened our Christmas Day and all the days.

It's human destiny to end life with a sleep, and our dear men go out in a blaze of undying glory where we who must stay at home will just flicker out—at the foot instead of the summit of our hill of glorious life. And then, too, for many of our men, to fall fighting so that England may live is an ending divinely unexpected, divinely satisfying, a chance to be numbered among England's ever-living heroes, that they never dreamed would come their way. In "The Volunteer" Herbert Asquith has written of these:

Here lies the clerk who half his life had spent
Toiling at ledgers in a city grey,
Thinking that so his days would drift away
With no lance broken in life's tournament.

But now his waiting dreams are satisfied;
From twilight to the halls of dawn he went,
His lance is broken, but he lies content
With that high hour! . . .

Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence
Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.

So, at Christmas-time anyway, more than ever, it's up to us to laugh if only that we may not weep! One thing to be thankful for—the great Yapp S.O.S. campaign doesn't start in till the New Year. Which, by the way, 'fraid there'll be no missing—with five-minute speeches on Saving-or-Starving at the theatres and even in the churches, which I always think, don't you, are perfectly *wicked* appetisers?

I know *I* always feel I could almost eat the parson or the pews—I'm always so sharp-set—when my number's up at a house-party to 'company the hostess to church on a Sunday morning. S'pose it's the reward of virtue. But it's awful bad for the Rhondda rules. Reminds me, bit rough, don't you think, the way it's up to the "upper classes" to set examples and things to the *bourgeoisie?*

Can't enjoy your caviare at Claridge's or your Bortsch at the Berkeley or even the simplest fodder anywhere without bein' told you'r ecorruptin' the nation's morals and havin' a perfectly 'palling psychological effect on the mere masses, who naturally depend on us for the last word in table manners. Really, to hear some of these Controller people gassing around, you'd think us sort of Diveses feastin' away while Lazarus chases around for crumbs and that sort of thing. Whereas if they only knew, we're really rationin' much more than the others. It's so good for the complexion, you know.

Yours hungrily,
EVE.

December 25th, 1917.

BELOVED BETTY,

Christmas Greetings! The Best and many of 'em! May this be the last, the very *very* last war one, and may there never never *never* be another with all our men so frightf'ly far away in all the utterly uttermost corners of the earth and sea and sky.

Here's to them,
And here's to Blighty:
They in their gum-boots,
And us in our—er—Georgette;
Both of us feeling a little bit flighty. . . .

No—no, of course, I know the original doesn't go *quite* like that. But as Vi Loraine would say,

A poor girl's got to be so careful.

And it takes so many sorts to make a world, and the Epistle according to Eve is read, they do say, in virtuous vicarages as well as in the dem'd, damp, moist, unpleasant dug-outs of our "licentious soldiery," dear things. Also in decorous drorin'-rooms same as in the cheerio atmosphere of the ward-rooms and the gun-rooms of His Britannic Majesty's Senior and Silent Service.

Which 'minds me, their health, their *very* good health! To those most priceless beans I raise my brimming bumper of bubbly (Lord Rhondda isn't rationing *that*, I think) once, twice, three times, four times. And likewise Tou-Tou and Bing. . . . They, too, lift their little saucers of nice, sweet, hot, warm milk (after all, it *is* Christmas and there's

no war yet in China), and lap with heart and soul and ducky little red tongues—

No Heel Taps
Wouf !—

to khaki and navy blue.

Here's *to* them ! Every single blessed one—from the biggest brass hat fairly plastered with those so becoming tabs and the dear, funny, old also-rans who parade Pall Mall, wearing so gallantly that

. . . Time was
When Love and I
Were well acquainted

look in their near-side eye, down to these very youngest, newest, freshest, pricelessest that Mr. Crosland calls

The Colonel's grief and the Sergeant's curse,
His Majesty's Second Lieutenants;
The regiments take 'em for better or worse,
His Majesty's Second Lieutenants;
A sort of medicine for the soul—
Yet pledge 'em deep in the loving bowl,
For they spread the honour thick on the roll,
His Majesty's Second Lieutenants.

Never forgetting, of course, those heart-palpers, those tigers—the boys in blue and gold. But for whom, as someone's said, the war 'd have been over long ago—only *we* shouldn't have won it. From Admirals, fairly lightin' up the surrounding country with positive armfuls of the broadest, most blazing gold lace, down to the tiniest, cherubbiest snotty of them all. War-babies, as Bartimeus calls 'em, whose favourite tea is sloe-gin and bangers (which

is sausages), not to mention strawberry jam, bacon and eggs, cocoa, cake and sardines.

It 'll be a horrid Christmas without them, and once again the only toast 'll be "To absent Friends," not one left out, and first of all, of course, the "feet" —those gallant regiments of the line who've borne so marvellously, without a grouse or a grumble, the heat and burden of so many awful battle days. And then the cavalry, and with them, of course, the camelry, those swish battle-fighters of the Farther East.

Here's the best, too, to all the rest. The wonderful flying men who ride the whirlwind and the darkness and who have the heavens for their battlefields, "whose every flight is a romance, every record an epic, who are the knight-errants of this war, without fear and without reproach." And to the tanks, and the machine-gunners, and the Archies and the trench mortars, and the R.A.M.C. men who've done such wonderful things in saving for us our men's so awf'ly precious lives; and the labour and transport men; and the Mercantile Marine.

And not only officers, but all O.R.'s as well. And not only English and Scotch and Irish and Welsh troops, but all the Overseas cohorts, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Africans, and the rest who fight for us on all our far-flung fronts—Flanders, Italy, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Salonika, Africa.

I'd nearly forgotten the gunners—those heavies that are, the P.M. says, at once the admiration and the terror even of the Hun. And then there's the woundeds—that we're so, *so* glad to have home

again, for all their hurts, poor darlings. And the prisoners who, poor, patient, caged creatures, are suffering such long-drawn-out agonies of *ennui* and worse, but who *will* be home again with us . . . some day.

And when the toasts are over, for all of us, memories bitter and heart-breaking, but proud . . . of all those dear others who have fallen for England—

> As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
> Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
> As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
> To the end, to the end, they remain.

Yours, and theirs, always,
EVE.

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